

TIP

THE INDEPENDENT PUBLISHER

JANUARY
2020

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

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Mac App of the Year 2019

Affinity Publisher

As you may know I have been searching for a replacement for the Adobe Creative Cloud Suite. Not because it isn't great software, but because it costs too much! At least \$50 each month for the rest of my life. I finally found a suite that does the job. In fact, I've been using Affinity Publisher to create this very magazine for the last year. You may still need one Creative Cloud seat to do complex pagination but for only \$150 total you can outfit each graphic designer with excellent tools to have fun creating ads while replacing InDesign, Photoshop, and Illustrator.



Nearly ten years ago they had a vision – to create an all-new suite of professional creative applications that worked seamlessly together. They would be multi-platform (Mac & PC) and share exactly the same file format, and they'd utilize the latest hardware technology like multi-core processors and GPUs and build in core pro functionality from the start.

But it wasn't until June this year when they finally got to reveal the fundamental core of that vision. Not only did they complete the suite with the launch of Affinity Publisher, they revealed StudioLink – a feature that lets users immediately switch between Affinity Publisher, Affinity Designer and Affinity Photo all within the same app.

This level of cohesion within a creative suite of apps is something that had never been done before and it's been a complete gamechanger to the workflow of creative professionals like your folks. It's what they had been working towards all those years and is why they called their apps **Affinity**.

Affinity Publisher was recently recognized by Apple as the Mac App of the Year 2019. There are literally tens of thousands of apps they had to choose from, so to be awarded the top spot is an incredible achievement.

But they aren't sitting on their hands. The one question I hear most often is, "Can it open InDesign files?" The answer right now is, "No." However, I heard from Affinity that "there's some great stuff coming in their 1.8 update (including IDML import in Affinity Publisher!) which should be with you early in the New Year..."

That's something I can get excited about. Open IDML InDesign files, design the heck out of them, improve them, and save them as Affinity Publisher files.

If you are interested in learning more about this option I will be showing the attendees at the Publishers Summit the entire suite of products (Publisher, Photo, and Designer) on Saturday morning. See pages 14-16 and sign up now. ■

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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Contact Kevin Kamen
516 242 2857
info@kamengroup.com

At most of my newspaper customer seminars, I hear various comments from some of the attendees about their negative relationships with advertising salespeople from their local paper. Here are 7 of the most talked about comments:

1. BEING TOO AGGRESSIVE AND PUSHY

Sometimes, there is a fine line between being excited and enthusiastic about the publication—and being aggressive and pushy. Advertising prospects are sensitive to this approach. Advertising salespeople should be trained to understand good human relations, recognizing that most selling is based upon it. All the sales training programs in the world won't help if salespeople don't understand what I call "First Brain Communication", which stresses emotional connection over hard sell logic. One example is to show your creative spec layouts for a campaign and get the prospect's ego emotionally involved in the process, before discussing any facts and figures.

Even today, I'm still surprised at salespeople who push logic with facts and figures before getting the prospect emotionally involved in the layout presentation.

2. WASTING TOO MUCH TIME

Failure to keep appointments, providing unnecessary information, taking too long to get to the point, and failure to ask for the order, are some of the time wasting situations that irritate many advertisers in their relations with advertising salespeople.

3. RUNNING DOWN COMPETITOR PUBLICATIONS

Though salespeople must be knowledgeable about their competition, they many times irritate their customers if they use that information to down them. Sometimes faced with the objection about a competitor's lower rate, a

simple "they know the value of their services" will suffice. Then proceed to show why you can give them more value with your services and your rates.

4. TALKING TOO MUCH

A classic complaint is that salespeople ramble on and on about unnecessary detail. Salespeople must know when to stop, listen, and be prepared to ask for the order. This is perhaps one of the biggest problems in communicating while selling.

Salespeople must know when to stop, listen, and be prepared to ask for the order.

5. ATTITUDE OF INDIFFERENCE AFTER THE SALE IS MADE

After a campaign is planned and the contract is signed, the salesperson has to maintain the same level of helpfulness and caring that he or she made before the sale. Indifference can create a negative relationship and can be a real word of mouth problem for the salesperson in the future.

6. POOR PRESENTATION

When I go out with salespeople in a coaching capacity, I am sometimes appalled at their presentation strategy. Many merchant prospects have complained that salespeople show features, but seldom demonstrate how their product will benefit the buyer's business or help solve a problem. A good closing comment might be "I'm here to solve your marketing problems, not just spend your money".

7. DRESSING INAPPROPRIATELY

Though there is a trend toward informality, this should not be taken for granted. A merchant recently commented that the initial meeting may decide whether they want to see a

7 Reasons Advertising Salespeople Irritate Their Customers

by **Bob Bering**

salesperson again and the wearing apparel of the salesperson was a major factor in that decision. Wrinkled clothing, poor color selection, and out of date clothing style can damage a good relationship with a prospect.

Finally, there is a likeability factor in selling. Selling yourself can be very true.

See Bob's website at www.bobbirting.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@bobbirting.com or 317-849-5408.

How do we reach Millennials?

Focus groups lead to a better understanding of young adults



by Kevin Slimp
kevin@kevinslimp.com

Steve Andrist, executive director of North Dakota Newspaper Association, asked me an interesting question yesterday. It was related to my visit to Bismarck in October to work with a focus group of millennials from throughout the state who met together to spend a good part of a day looking at, and discussing, newspapers.

Prior to my trip to Bismarck, I did what I often do: I surveyed newspaper readers and non-readers throughout the U.S. and Canada to determine what differences there were, if any, between the general population and millennials related to interest in newspapers. After meeting with the focus group in Bismarck, I met with North Dakota publishers to discuss what we had learned during the day. A week or so later, I wrote a report for NDNA with the findings of the focus group.

Steve's question yesterday was simple, "Do you have any quick advice on what you'd suggest newspapers do with this information?"

We learned a lot about millennials prior to, and during, the day in Bismarck. We learned they're not quick to spend money on any type of news. If they do spend money, they'd prefer to spend it on their local newspaper than anywhere else. We also learned that most of the millennials who live away from home check their hometown newspaper website for local news now and then.



In answer to Steve's question, here are the main takeaways I would suggest community newspapers keep in mind:

- **Millennials**, like most other in the general population, aren't looking for national or international news in their community papers. Even when looking at papers from larger cities in the state, the group reported having no interest in reading news from outside the community.
- **Millennials** prefer print, as do most other newspaper readers. While they will check out their hometown paper online while away in college or after college, they indicate they would be more likely to spend money on a printed newspaper in the place they live than a digital version.
- **Millennials** have less interest in sports in their community papers than the general population. When ranking areas of interest, local sports came far down the list.
- **Millennials** are most interested in local news, especially news related to - and stories about - individuals. They are more likely to buy a newspaper if it includes stories about individuals in the millennial age group now and then. They are also interested in local government news.
- **Millennials** have a lot of interest in reading about local entertainment, even in a small town. This might mean the entertainment is taking place in a larger town up the road, but entertainment and music are of great interest to readers in this age group.
- **Millennials**, much like the general population, indicate they would read a

free paper if it arrived in their mailbox once a week. More than 50 percent (in the national survey and in the focus group) indicated they would read the paper every week, with another 35 percent indicating they likely read the free paper most weeks.

In answer to Steve's question, what would I take away from this information if I were a local newspaper publisher?

First, I'd remember that millennials of this generation aren't so different from most of us when we were in our 20s. They're busy and don't read newspapers as often as older groups, but most of them will likely be newspaper readers as they marry and have families.

To promote readership among millennials, keep in mind their interest in stories about individuals. Interview high school, college-age and young adults for stories on a regular basis.

Include more news about local entertainment and music.

Finally, I'd keep the statistic related to free weekly papers in mind. I'd begin the thinking about how to use the knowledge that most people report they would read a free newspaper if it ended up in their mailbox. Whether that means including more news in our free pubs or finding other ways to take advantage of this statistic, it's important information.

In my next column, I'll share some of what I've learned about newspaper websites - what works and what doesn't - as a result of research I did for the Texas Center for Community Journalism in November and December.



IFPA BOARD MEETING, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2019

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

Board members present: Joyce Frericks, Joe Nicastro, Rick Wamre, Jane Quairoli, Deborah Phillips, Shane Goodman, Doug Fabian, Manuel Karam, Jimbo Marston and Douglas Fry, Executive Director

Treasurer's Report: Deborah, Overall \$170,500 over budget for the positive. Doing well. Joe made a motion to accept the report, Rick seconded it. All in favor.

Minutes:-Douglas, Joyce made a motion to accept the minutes from the last meeting, Deborah seconded it. All in favor.

2020 Publishers Summit: Manuel & Shane, Douglas- Good promo pieces in the works. Started email campaign. Shane- Majority of the content is ready. Sixteen currently signed up.

SHARE Groups: Sales Managers- Doug, Same report. All is well. Publishers- Joe, Next meeting in January. Specialty Publications- Rick, Shifted to quarterly and have not had a call since last board meeting.

Website: Joyce, Everything is good and updated

Event Planning: June Board meeting, September event (Denver)- Douglas, Looking at a hotel in Denver. Good idea to have the June board meeting there as a preview for the September event there. Will is on board to do a Digital Summit in September there also.

Old Business: None New Business: None

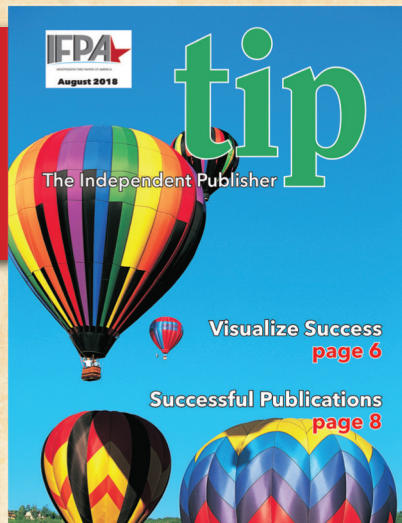
NATS- Joe (Zoom Meeting): The purpose of the Zoom Meeting was to show members what the National classified program looks like, how to use it and how to place ads. Joe gave his presentation and went through the site online. The Board had questions regarding fees,

IFPA Board Minutes

membership, monitoring and marketing. Joe stated there is basically no startup cost and will send out other information in the next few days.

Just a revenue source for IFPA. To develop a National Classified site to call their own and to market it.

Shane made a motion to adjourn. Rick seconded it. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 10:00am (EST.)



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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?

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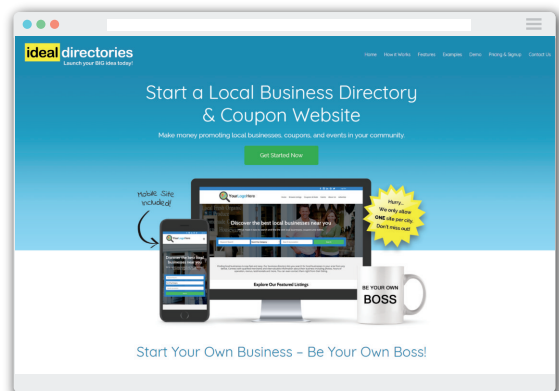
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How much does it cost: Plans start at \$99/mo
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How can it help you grow?

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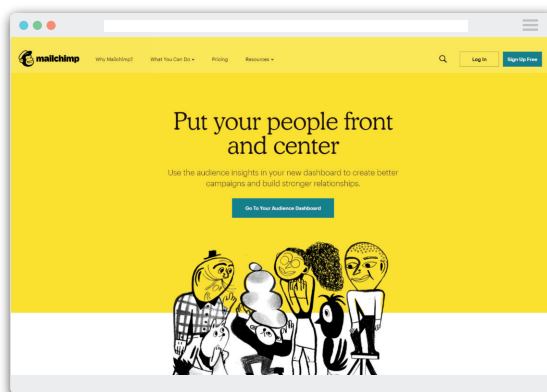
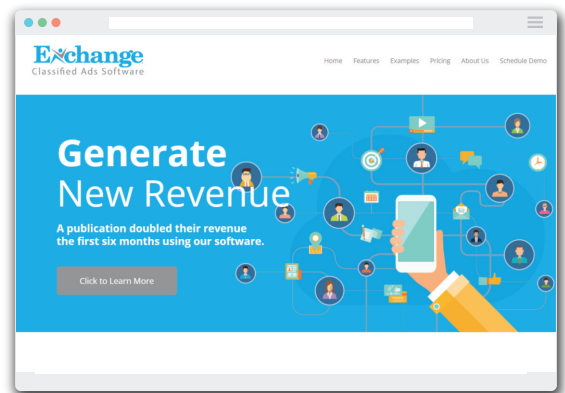
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An incredibly robust, but simple-to-use software platform that powers your publication's website and classifieds system that can instantly boost classified ad sales.

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!

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Schedule & Topics

The 2020 Publishers Summit will be supercharged with fast-paced presentations. Each presenter will have 20 minutes to give us three ideas about his or her subject. The next 20 minutes will be Question & Answer from the group with input from those who may have other solutions/ideas. Finally a 10 minute break to regroup and prepare for the next session. You will leave with lots of great ideas to improve your bottom line and take your publication to the next level.

Thursday, Feb. 6, 2020

2 p.m. IFPA Board Meeting

6:30 p.m. Relax in the Lounge

Friday, Feb. 7, 2020

8 a.m. Fast, Full Breakfast

9 a.m. Preston Gibson- Three Success Factors for Local Publications: what they are, how to maximize opportunities, evaluating your publication

10 a.m. Deborah Phillips & Jane Quairolì- Dress codes at work: what is legal and what isn't; actual policies, what to watch for, and why

11 a.m. Joe Nicastro- Using online services to save money and streamline your business: Phone systems: options, pricing, etc. Online: the cloud, Google Docs, options, pros and cons

Noon Lunch

1 p.m. Tom Ward- How to sell your publication: what is it worth; how to market it, on your own or with a broker; how to pick a broker

2 p.m. Eric McRoy- Personality profiles: how to use them; what do they cost; examples of vendors. Hiring sales people: how and where to prospect; how to pay; sample interview questions

3 p.m. Rick Wamre- How to add no cost or inexpensive editorial copy to your free paper

4 p.m. Joyce Frericks- Requester status postage: what are the savings, details, options, etc.

6- 7:30 p.m. Relax in the Lounge

Saturday, Feb. 8, 2020

8 a.m. Fast, Full Breakfast

9 a.m. Doug Fabian- Setting up a Sweepstakes that generates 9,372 Entries, selling the product, getting emails, how to manage

10 a.m. Douglas Fry- Alternative products to Adobe Creative Suite, actual costs and examples, pros and cons, photos, illustration, page layout

11 a.m. Manuel Karam- CRM (Customer Relationship Management) systems: options, pricing, what they offer, why use them

Noon Lunch

1 p.m. — Shane Goodman- Open Forum: bring your questions, challenges, missed opportunities so that your fellow publishers can focus hundreds of years of experience and success to give you solutions





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Graphic Hooks

By Ellen Hanrahan

And so it begins... A new year, new lessons to learn. Last month I said that I'd talk about options to **Adobe Photoshop**, and well, I may have to delay that a bit. There are alternatives to Adobe's Photoshop, but maybe the better question is, what do you want your image editing program to do.

Most of the time we used the program to simply create better photos for our publication. Seriously, most of us have been using Adobe products for a long while and some of the other programs are geared for photographers and "creative" effects to use on our photos.

Give me a little time to think on this... and possibly I should just do an article on the basics of creating better photos for newsprint.

Happy Birthday InDesign

In light of the fact that this is the beginning of a New Year, I have decided to talk about the **Adobe InDesign** Program.

My latest issue of **InDesign Magazine** (November, Issue 127) is a history and celebration of the software program that I have been using since June of 2004.

My introduction to this program was not what I intended. Well, here's what happened...

"Due to one of my somewhat minor screw ups, like installing virus protection without reading all the way to the last paragraph, I managed to mess up my computer system.

So I reinstalled Mac OS X, OS 10.2.8 to be precise. Since I did a clean install, I didn't have to reinstall my programs—or so I thought. Mostly all my preferences had to be updated, but I kept all internet and basic settings.

However... when I launched QuarkXPress it stated that my "activation file had been corrupted" and I needed to "reinstall a copy of QuarkXPress." So I did. Even reregistered but I didn't send the info to reactivate my program. See, in the "good old days," you put the program back on and you were good to go. But I was in a hurry, so thought I would do it later, 'cause I had work to do!

OK. So today is "later," and I just spent the last thirty minutes or so trying to get the blasted XPress program reactivated! All this activity is going on over the internet as I fill out their form and find out I need a 47-digit activation code, which I can access via the screen. Hello... I am not getting this info and all they do is direct me to a form I can fill out and attach to an e-mail (which I decided to do later...again). What I really need to do is reinstall the XPress program...again, and this time make sure that I remove all the

pieces of the "old" program. But I have work to do—like this article, and it's already getting near zero hour!

Fortunately, I've been working in InDesign at work, so I'm not fumbling around—too much! Thing is, I didn't want to start from scratch, so knowing that InDesign opens XPress 4 files, I went back to the December 2003 article. I at least had my document settings, margins and style sheets (a little tweaking was needed)."

Fortunately, it all worked out, and the following week I went to a Mac Design Convention in Chicago—so I got a lot of answers! And I never did go back to the QuarkXPress program.

... Yep, There's More

This issue was also filled with what's new in **InDesign CC 2020**, 20 awesome scripts, typefaces, and blog articles ranging from establishing visual hierarchy, designing a logo, character style changes, formatting tips for bullets and numbered lists and a lot of practical ideas.

If interested, go to indesignsecrets.com.

There is a free membership, but if you want the monthly magazine (and all back issues), templates and tips, the fee is \$59/year (usually there is a \$10 discount so \$49/year—worth it!).

They Even Send "Tips"

You can also choose to have "tips" sent to you on a weekly basis, such as...

Make Rules (Above/Below) extend outside of the frame, too.

To extend a rule above (or below) a paragraph outside the right edge of text frame, set the rule's width to Column and enter a negative measure in the Right Indent field.

The greater the negative value of the Right Indent, the more the rule will extend beyond the right edge of the frame.

If you enter a negative indent in the Left Indent field, the rule will extend beyond the left edge of the frame.

Note that the Keep In Frame option affects rules with Offset values that would cause them to extend beyond the top of the frame. It does not affect rules that extend beyond the sides of frames. —Anne-Marie Concepción

The "tip" was provided by Anne-Marie Concepción, and I have applied this effect to the Guide Tips in the next column.

Paragraph Rules can be found under the Paragraph Tab in the Drop-down Options (3rd segment down).

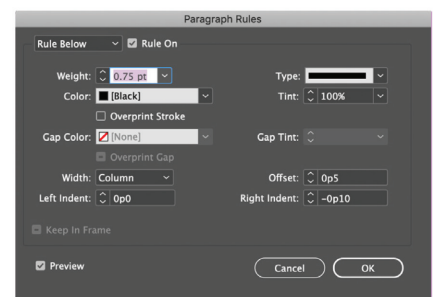
The Paragraph Rules tab is shown. I adjusted my column width, set my offset to 5 with a right indent of -10.



GUIDE TIPS PART 1 1) Double-click the spot on the ruler where you want to add a guide. 2) While dragging a guide, hold the Shift key to have the guide snap to tick marks on the ruler.

GUIDE TIPS PART 2 1) Hold the Option/Alt key and drag an existing guide to make a copy of it. 2) When you're dragging a new guide from a ruler, you can change it from horizontal to vertical (or vice versa) by holding Option/Alt.

GUIDE TIPS PART 3 1) To create a page guide that extends to the edges of a page, drag a guide from the ruler and release the guide over the page. 2) To create a spread guide that extends to the edges of the pasteboard, drag a guide from the ruler and release the guide over the pasteboard (or hold the Command/Ctrl key while you release the guide).



Final Thoughts

All my best for an enlightening, entertaining and educational New Year!

Ellen Hanrahan hanrahan.in@att.net ©2020

Right and Left Brain Selling

by John Foust
Raleigh, NC

Diane was telling me about her early days in selling. “One day stands out in my mind,” she said. “I had back-to-back appointments with two different prospects to talk about a special section. The first person was interested in what his ad would look like and the importance of selecting illustrations to project the right image. The second person jumped right into the numbers and wanted to know the details of rates and tracking systems.

“Both people bought ads, but it fascinated me that they arrived at their decisions in such different ways. Both cared about the appearance of their ads, but the first person cared more. Both people cared about numbers, but the second person cared more.

“That’s when I realized that there is a lot of truth in the right brain-left brain concept I had heard so much about. The left side is the logical, mathematical side and the right side is the emotional, creative side. Of course, no one is 100 percent on either side, but most people have a natural tendency toward one side. Tendencies usually show up in childhood. Left brain children are better at math and right brain children are better at creative writing.”

Diane explained that these traits are clearly evident in adults. “We’ve all been in conversations where the other person seems to be on a completely different wavelength. That could be due to different thinking styles. One of the key principles of selling is to ‘know your audience,’ which goes beyond knowing their company history and marketing motives. We have to get in step with the other person’s thinking style, too.

“During a sales presentation, I try to adapt to the other person’s style. When I’m talking to left brainers, I focus on facts and figures – and I use testimonial examples with lots of statistical evidence. When I talk to right brainers, I concentrate on creative strategy, with similar testimonials. When I meet with two or more people, I make sure to include information for both types.”

What about the ads themselves? “It’s interesting to study ads that deliberately take thinking styles into consideration,” Diane said. “Look through a technical publication and you’ll see ads that are filled with product specs and statistics. The same advertisers would have to take a different approach in a publication which appeals primarily to right brain readers. But in a general interest setting – like a newspaper – it’s smart to include ad elements that appeal to both types.

“All of this has convinced me that flexibility is one of the most important traits of an advertising professional,” she explained. “Too many people in this business think they can make the same

One of the key principles of selling is to ‘know your audience,’ which goes beyond knowing their company history and marketing motives.

presentation to everybody. That just doesn’t work. We have to make adjustments and do everything possible to connect. We shouldn’t expect them to adapt to us. We have to adapt to them.”

Diane makes a good point. It’s not always about right and wrong. Sometimes it’s a matter of right and left.

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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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20 Ways to Create Amazing Service

by Shep Hyken

With all the focus on how technology—including AI, data, personalization and more—can drive a better customer experience, I wanted to shift my focus back to basics. To this end, I recently published an article in Forbes about ways to create an amazing customer experience in 2020, and I thought it would be enjoyed by you. Here are twenty ideas on how you can up your customer service game in 2020.

1 Stay in touch. Too often companies focus all their efforts on acquiring new customers instead of keeping existing customers. Don't forget about your "sold" customers—stay in touch on a (somewhat) regular basis. Depending on the type of business, it may be as infrequent as once a year.

2 Send a surprise "gift" when your customers are least expecting it. Everybody sends gifts around the holidays. Find other times to surprise your customers with an unexpected gift. It doesn't have to be expensive. Just a clever, thoughtful touch that gets noticed.

3 Eliminate long hold times. Don't waste your customers' time. If you must make them wait, let them know for how long and give them the option of being called back.

4 Send a thank-you note. When was the last time you sent or received a thank you note? Surprise and delight your customers by sending them an old-fashioned, handwritten note in an envelope with an address and a stamp.

5 Freaky Fast" Response Times. Who doesn't love fast service? Jimmy John's, the fast-food chain known for "freaky fast" service and delivery, knows how much customers appreciate speed. Take a leaf out of their book by finding ways to be freaky fast for your customers.

6 Do something special for Get to Know Your Customer Days. These days happen four times a year on the third Thursday of the beginning of each quarter (January, April, July and Octo-

ber). For more information, go to www.GetToKnowYourCustomerDay.com.

7 Use video. Video is an amazing tool. It's inexpensive and can often be posted for free. Use it for online tutorials, a video version of Frequently Asked Questions and more. Check out this recent Forbes article on using video.

8 Call the customer instead of making them call you for appointments. It's one less thing the customer has to do when doing business with you.

9 Celebrate National Customer Service Week (the first full week of October). You'll have to wait until October, but

I recently published an article in Forbes about ways to create an amazing customer experience in 2020

that doesn't mean you can't start planning now. For more information, go to the official website for National Customer Service Week.

10 Share content that is all about the customer and not about the company. In other words, it isn't a sales or marketing piece. Well, actually, it is, but it shouldn't feel like it.

11 Create your customer service mantra. This is a big one. We often spend a month preparing for a full-day meeting to help our clients create their mantra. For those that don't have one, now is the time to create one. The mantra is a simple phrase—one sentence or less—that sums up your customer service culture. For example, ours at Shepard Presentations is "Always Be Amazing." We want to be amazing to our clients and help them be amazing. Our friends at Ace Hardware have a simple one too: "The Helpful Hardware



Place.” The Ritz-Carlton’s is a little longer. They call it their credo: “We’re ladies and gentlemen serving ladies and gentlemen.” Once you have your mantra, it’s easy to stay focused on what’s important in delivering an amazing customer service experience.

12 Give back. ’Tis the season of giving. Why not become part of a cause or participate in a charity? Customers love when the places they do business with give back. It’s good karma!

13 Have a weekly huddle with your team and spend five minutes sharing how someone created a great customer experience that week. Little reminders shared consistently with employees will help keep customer service front of mind. Plus, it makes everyone feel good to acknowledge team success.

14 Publish a report or white paper that will benefit your customers. Customers love relevant information. This could be a great opportunity to make sure you have the most recent and relevant information in your field. It also creates confidence in your customer base by proving your knowledge and expertise. This can be a great marketing piece to attract future customers, too.

15 Have everyone share an example of when they received a great service experience from a fellow employee. In this case, it’s better to receive than give. You get to recognize your fellow employees for what they’ve done for you. This serves as a good reminder and also builds stronger team bonds.

16 Do more on social media. Participate in conversations on social platforms and become part of the online customer community. However, this isn’t an opportunity to sell. It’s an opportunity to engage. There’s a big difference!

17 Have a contest where everyone submits a creative—even unusual—customer service or experience idea. As above, the prize isn’t about how good the idea is, but about the participation.

18 Ask your customers my favorite question, which I refer to as the One Thing Question: Is there one thing you can think of that would make doing business with us better? Read every answer and take action on some of the better ideas. It’s amazing what happens when you listen to your customers! When you listen to them, they feel valued and appreciated.

19 Have a contest to see who can deliver the best experience to an external or internal customer. It’s nice to recognize the best, but the prize should be a random drawing for all those willing to participate. Of course, you should share the best of the best.

20 Don’t forget that customer experience starts with employee experience. Remember, what happens on the inside of the organization is felt on the outside by the customer. If you want to have a great customer experience, you must fo-

cus on your employee experience. Take care of employees, and they will take care of your customers.

There you have it—by now, I’ve shared with you my top twenty tips and ideas to upping your customer service/experience game in 2020. I hope you’ve found them useful, and that they’ve perhaps inspired some business-focused New Year’s resolutions! I’d like to take this opportunity to wish all our Shepard Letter subscribers and readers a happy new year. Here’s to 2020 being your best year yet, filled with revenue, profits and, of course, amazing customer experiences!

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 ■



*Customers love fast service –
crazy fast service!*

Every once in a while, someone asks me what I plan to do now that “newspapers are dead.” But if print is dead, why are so many national companies still sending me their thick, slick, full-color catalogs?”

Connie and I usually get at least two or three catalogs every day. We’ve received catalogs this past month from L.L. Bean, J.Jill, Coldwater Creek, Nordstrom, Harry & David, Front Gate, Hammacher Schlemmer, Kansas City Steak Company, The Vermont Country Store, Pier 1, Artful House, Wine Enthusiasts, Crate & Barrel, Talbots, Pottery Barn, Chico’s and more. Many of the firms are ones we’ve never shopped.

We even got a catalog from American Girl, the doll company. We haven’t bought an American Girl doll or the company’s doll clothing since our granddaughters were in grade school. Zoey, the oldest, is a mature woman today working in Chicago and Katie, her cousin, is a sophomore at Iowa State University.

I’ve wondered how Katie would react if I mailed her the American Girl catalog at her sorority house and suggested she pick out which one she’d like for Christmas. It has been at least seven years since we’ve been a customer and we’re still getting American Girl doll catalogs.

Many of the catalogs are the size of popular women’s magazines featuring nothing but advertising. From experience I would guess each one costs the company at least a dollar, often much more, to cover the design, printing and postage.

Clothing, food and home decor firms are not the only ones pitching their products and services with catalogs. Year around, nothing exceeds the number of direct-mail cards, let-

ters and catalogs Connie and I get from various cruise lines.

We took a Viking River Cruise on the Danube at least four years ago. Ever since that time we seem to get at least one printed piece from Viking cruises each day. Sometimes we get two or three a single day. Usually one is a thick catalog promoting the various river cruises and a second one pushing the firm’s new, small ship ocean cruises. Some days the catalogs are accompanied by an oversized postcard promoting a limited time deal.

Connie and I are convinced the Viking Company has reinvested all the money we spent with them for that one cruise attempting us get us to do it again.

Evidently the mailing companies share or sell each other their prospect mailing list. Along with Viking we also get promotional mailings from a dozen cruise lines even though we have booked cruises on only a limited few.

So, and I admit I am prejudiced, what does this tell me? It tells me print advertising is still an effective way to reach the most-desired, best-qualified buyer.

All the above firms also blast us with e-mail and Facebook advertising. Like many local merchants, these national giants are doing digital advertising at a significant savings compared to print advertising.

National marketers have huge buyer research firms and heavily monitored result-to-spending budgets. They wouldn’t be sending all that printed advertising if it wasn’t getting significant results.

But here is the local difference.

Proof There Is Value In Print Advertising

by **Peter Wagner**


What those national catalog firms don’t have is the easy reach of the local paper offering inexpensive, dependable, full-color print advertising. Since they can’t enjoy the ease and savings offered by a local print publication, they have to turn to the more expensive direct mail.

Today’s leading businesses are depending on a wide variety of media: radio, Facebook, e-mail, websites, cable TV and direct mail as well as select local newspapers and shoppers.

But the leading firms never overlook the power of print. Local newspapers and shoppers can present a powerful message that features a combination of beautiful photographs or illustrations, original, highly-crafted copy and marvelous process color.

Locally published papers remain in a home for a full week or more. They are available to be read and reread any time and can be referred to as often the reader desires.

But most of all, local papers are a well-edited, creatively designed, credible and trusted information source. In the minds of the readers, that credibility often extends to cover the advertising, too. ■



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