

TIP

THE INDEPENDENT PUBLISHER

FEBRUARY
2020



**USING YOUR WEBSITE
TO INCREASE PRINT**

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**BOB WRIGHT
SCHOLARSHIP**

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**CAN ASSOCIATIONS
SURVIVE?**

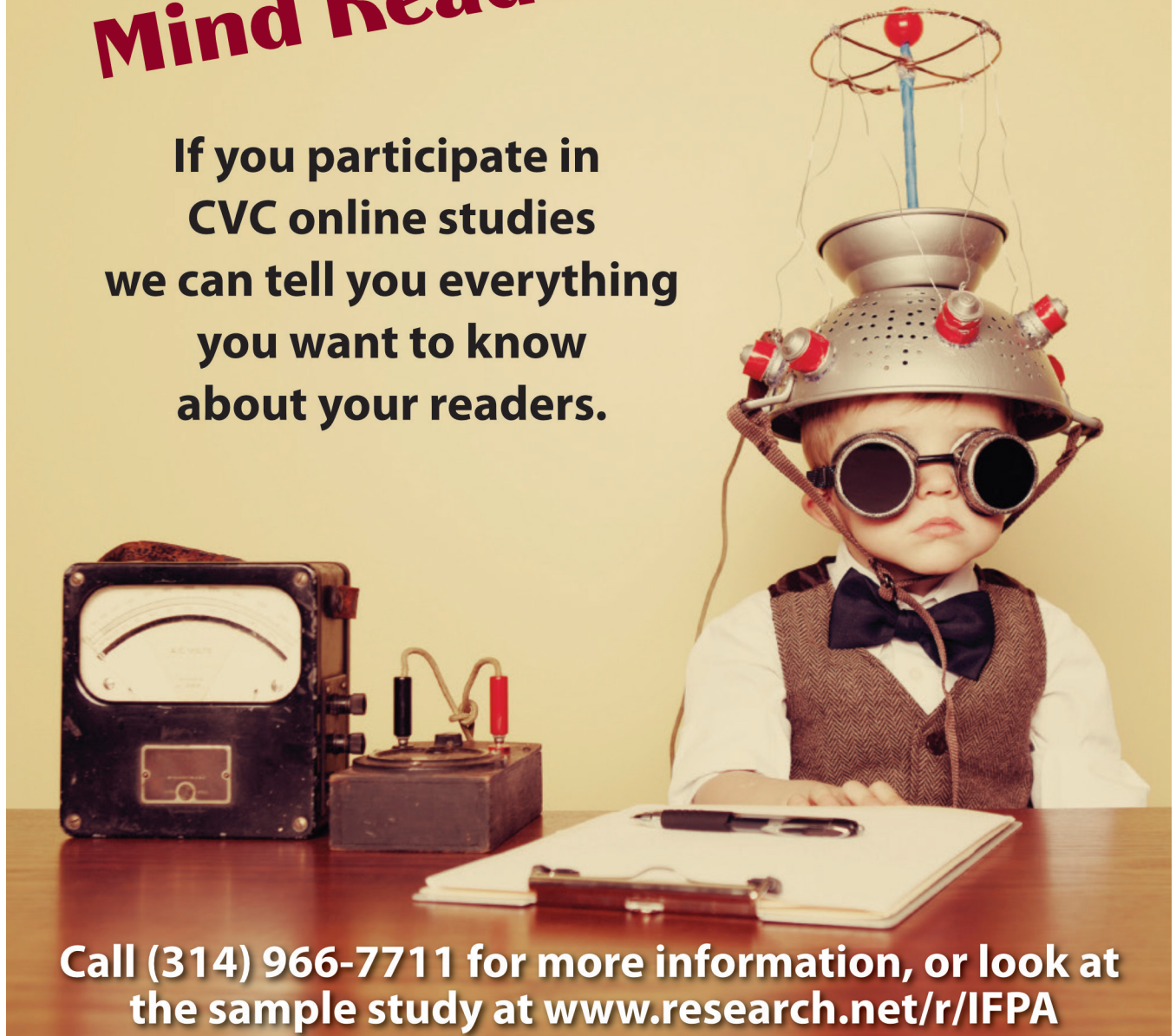
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“...it can be independence forever for those who value it sufficiently... if they give their allegiance to an association such as this one, they will be dedicated to keeping the spirit alive, and they will be doing it by helping each other.”

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

THE INDEPENDENT PUBLISHER

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Rick Wamre, President

Federal Collective Membership
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Managing Editor

Douglas Fry
e-mail: douglas@ifpa.com

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TRYING TO GROW
MORE SUBSCRIBERS
AND REVENUE?

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CADNET Verification Process Goes Online

Twice a year we ask that you send tearsheets of the CADNET classified and display ads that run in your paper. This is to help us verify that your publications are running at least 75% of those ads. This information qualifies you for the paid for CVC audit, membership in IFPA, and rebate checks based on your circulation.



Honestly, no one looks forward to that process. It has been time consuming because you have had to go through the archives of your printed publication, highlight the ads for each issue, tear out the pages from your paper, find the next required issue, repeat the process, then ship all that to be verified. Your people spent a lot of time, energy, and inky fingers to make this happen twice a year.

We've come up with a better way. It's an online entry system where you can upload your publications pages to the site in about 5 minutes instead of taking hours finding and shipping. Plus no inky fingers are involved.

We mailed you the ads we are looking for in four different weeks at random. Have your people generate PDFs of the pages that contain those ads and put them in one folder for ease of location.

Then go to the IFPA.com website, hover over CADNET, and select Verification at the bottom of the list. You can either do it the standard way by finding tear sheets and mailing them to us or you can click on the Online Verification button. That will take you to the site. This is the important part: **email me and I will forward your user name and password so you have access to the system** (douglas@ifpa.com). Enter your Username which is usually a four digit number and then your password.

Wait just a moment and your publication is called up ready for you to enter your tear sheets. We look for four different weeks of ads during each verification cycle. The tabs at the top of the site show which weeks we are looking for. Obviously, this changes each 6 months. See page 10 for a screenshot of what to expect.

The whole process of uploading your pages to the system will take about 5 minutes. That quickly and easily you will have entered all the material we need for the CADNET verification process. When you are finished simply click on the Log Off button and go about your day with a smile on your face because in 5 minutes you were able to do what took hours before.

I know this is going to save you a lot of time and effort. If you have any questions or suggestions as to how we can make this even easier let me know.

Thank you for your help in making IFPA successful.

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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North Carolina Weekly Shoppers. In business several decades.

Contact Kevin Kamen
516 242 2857
info@kamengroup.com

Many newspaper publishers struggle with their websites. It seems that most in the industry, magazines included, are looking for a way to "fix" what feels like the slow death of newspapers. But are newspapers really dying, or just in transition?

Lions Light Corporation, specializes in providing small and medium sized publications with full featured turn-key websites, generally for \$150+ per month. After speaking with well over a thousand publishers over the years, I can attest that more often than not, publishers are making the same mistakes, and overall share the same questions. Most have learned the importance of having a nice website, but few are satisfied with the marriage of their print and online products. If I were to articulate it for them, the main question they share is "How can I use our website to increase both my print circulation and advertising revenues?"

In this article, we'll discuss the latter half of this question. If you're interested in how your website can be used to increase print circulation sales (assuming your newspaper sells subscriptions), please read our next article on this topic.

One common mistake publishers make when wading through this question is listening to philosophies that don't apply to their market. For example, what works for a daily newspaper may not work for a small to medium sized weekly. If you're the publisher of a daily, then this article likely isn't for you, although you might glean ideas from it. This article is geared towards small and medium sized weekly and monthly newspapers and magazines.

HOW DO YOU USE YOUR WEBSITE TO INCREASE ADVERTISING REVENUES?

Publishers know how to sell print advertising, but often strike out when attempting to sell web advertising. Many publishers give up on web advertising, and let their websites fall by the wayside

after realizing that, in general, online advertising is twice as hard to sell as print advertising, and you cannot command the same price.

If this has not been your experience, congratulations, you're doing something right, and keep on doing it.

But if this has been your experience, maybe this approach can help. Let's start with a controversial idea, which is, stop selling the majority of your online ad spots. Yes that's what I said. Instead,

what works for a daily newspaper may not work for a small to medium sized weekly

offer the non-premium ad spots, typically located on the sides of your pages and stories, as perks to print advertisers to incentivize them to sign a 6 or 12 month print advertising contract. You may be surprised that this indirect method often generates more revenues than the direct method of attempting to sell web ads in the same manner you sell print ads. You could also use this approach with your business directory if you have one.

HOW IS INDIRECT REVENUE OFTEN BETTER THAN DIRECT?

Let's analyze why using your non-premium ad spots as perks may increase revenues more than selling those ad spots the old-fashioned way. If your publication is weekly, it's likely your ad sales staff are calling advertisers approximately 40 times per year. However, if your sales staff can get your existing print advertisers under contract, then this frees up your sales staff to pursue new print advertisers and thus new ad revenue. In our experience, this approach increases print advertising revenues, which vastly outweighs any revenues you'd get by selling these ad spots.

Using your website to increase print and online advertising revenues

by Dan Wilcox

You might ask, how should our sales staff approach print advertisers about contracting? They might say something like this, "Your print ad runs about 10 times per year, on average. If you'll run the same 10 ads via a 12-month contract, we will also place your ad on our website at no additional charge. And if you increase your print advertising to, say 12 times per year, then we'd be able to give you an even larger ad spot on our website." (For example, instead of a 300w x 250h ad, you may give them a 300w x 500h.) This is just one approach. Of course, it's up to you to determine what works best for your customers and market.

ARE THERE WEB ADS YOU SHOULD SELL?

In general, the ads you should sell are your premium ad spots, those typically located at the top of pages and stories. We've found that when speaking to the advertiser, "rebranding" these types of web ads as "website sponsorship packages", and requiring a 6 or 12 month commitment, while maintaining their current level of spending on print ad-

vertising, has the best results. You can also offer a discount for those advertisers that prepay. Because these ad spots are premium, and should be treated as such, you'll also likely want to limit the number available for sale to something like 3, 5, 7 or 10, depending on the size of your market. Some advertisers like to feel they're a part of something. Being a website sponsor can help them feel like they're getting something more than just a web ad. A small weekly community newspaper may sell these sponsorships for as low as \$150 per month, but your market may allow you to charge double or triple that.

OTHER WAYS TO INCREASE ONLINE REVENUE

A few other ways to increase online revenues include; Google surveys, sponsored content, and third party ad networks. Your publication may choose to implement just one of these revenue generating options, or all of them. However, small to medium sized publications often need to join a larger group of publications to sign up for sponsored

content. Lions Light offers such a program to any publication regardless of your website platform.

I hope this article has given you some useful tips and information on the often difficult task of selling web advertising, and how to use your website to increase advertising revenues. If you have questions, please feel free to contact us.

Dan Wilcox is the Vice-President and partner at Lions Light Corporation. Lions Light provides website solutions and consulting to small and medium-sized newspapers across the United States. Dan has helped lead Lions Light since 2007 and has over 25 years of experience in the newspaper business. Previously the majority owner of two leading industry newspapers in Alaska, Dan thrives on helping newspaper owners and managers grow their print circulation and advertising using their website. Dan now resides in Peoria, AZ where he enjoys spending time with family and friends, dirtbiking, hiking, and playing pool. Email: dan@lionslight.com Phone: (907) 223-7872 <https://www.facebook.com/LionsLight-Corp/>

Online Verification Site
Keep the ink off your fingers and submit your verification tearsheets electronically, just click here...
[Enter Your CADNET Verification Online](#)

CADNET Verification
Here is a PDF of the ads we are looking for to verify that your publication is running the CADNET Classified and Display ads. Thanks for your help!
[Download "2019 2nd Half Ads.pdf"](#)

Email Douglas Fry for your Username and Password to enter your verification pages online instead of the old fashioned way.

douglas@ifpa.com

IFPA BOARD MEETING, THURSDAY JANUARY 16, 2020

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

Board members in attendance were: Doug Fabian, Eric McRoy, Jane Quairoli, Rick Wamre, Joyce Frericks, Deborah Phillips, Shane Goodman, Joe Nicastro, Manuel Karam and Executive Director, Douglas Fry.

IFPA/AFCP Update: Rick Everyone received the email from Douglas recapping the meeting between Rick, Joyce, Charlie and John from AFCP. The idea of the meeting was to assign people to committees and to see what their thoughts were on specific topics.

Douglas gave an update on he and Deborah's committee. They are looking into an industry wide publication to replace TIP. The publication could have 16 pages of general industry information and eight pages each of IFPA and AFCP information. The concern is the possible

confusion of specific information for specific groups. They will be meeting again mid February.

Treasurer's Report: Deborah Net income \$194K for the year. \$100K is investment income. Cadnet is up over budget \$60K. Stayed well in budget. Douglas has prepared the 2020 budget and will be sending it to Deborah for approval and from there onto the board.

Joyce made a motion to accept the treasurer's report. Jane seconded it. All in favor. Report accepted. Joe made a motion to accept the minutes of the December 5th meeting. Deborah seconded it. All in favor. Minutes approved.

2020 Publishers Summit: Manuel and Shane All assignments are out. Anyone needing assistance with their topic or presentation let Shane or Manuel know. 32 Attendees so far. Douglas had a request to attend from a non member (prior member). Asked the board their thoughts. Douglas will ask him to join

IFPA Board Minutes

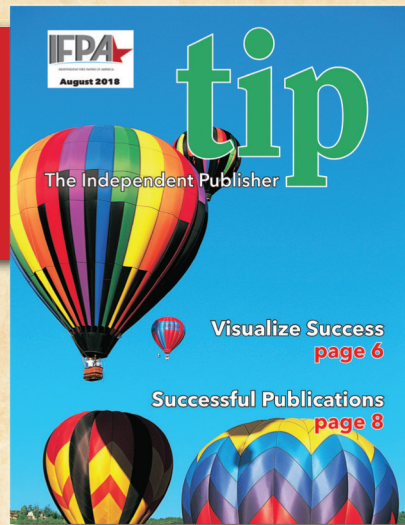
and then he may attend. Board agreed. Douglas asked if members conference presentations are power points that they get them to him early so he can make copies.

Website: Joyce All up to date.

Event Planning: June board meeting via Zoom, September event (Denver): Douglas All set. Waiting for the signed contract any day now from hotel in Denver. Douglas suggested a Zoom board meeting in September rather than a face to face. Rick suggested making the final decision in February.

Old Business Deborah has sent out posters for the Bob Wright scholarship.

Deborah made a motion to adjourn. Shane seconded it. All in favor. Meeting adjourned 9:31am (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?

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?

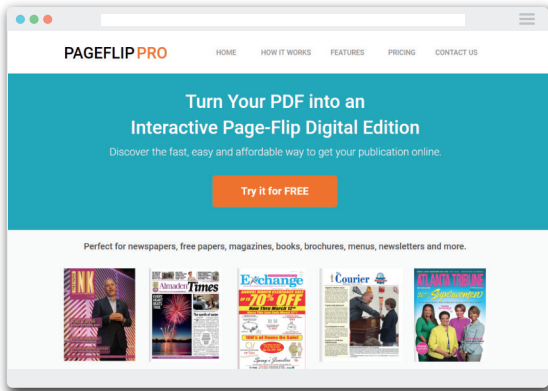
Turn-key business directory and coupon website that can be branded for your publication and market. Can easily be "bolted-on" to your existing website or run independently.

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?

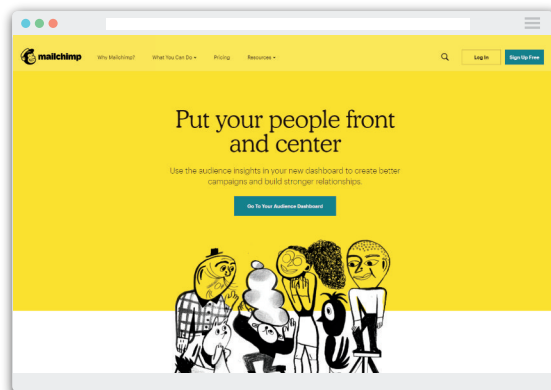
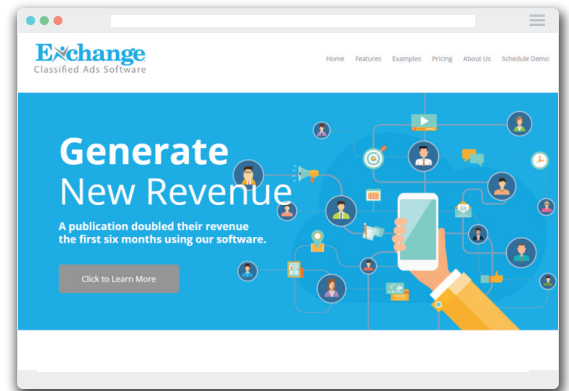
An incredibly robust, but simple-to-use software platform that powers your publication's website and classifieds system that can instantly boost classified ad sales.

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

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for one of four
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Have your student apply today!



Bob Wright Memorial Scholarship Requirements:

- Parent, grandparent or guardian must work for a community paper that is a current member of the Independent Free Papers of America (IFPA).
- Applicant must be a high school graduating senior or current college student.
- Applicant is not limited to attending a 4 year college. Vocational trade school or community college are also accepted.
- Application must be received by 3/27/20

**To download application: Visit www.ifpa.com
Click on “Member Benefits” the “Bob Wright Memorial Scholarships”**

“By uniting we stand, by dividing we fall,” wrote Pennsylvanian activist John Dickinson in 1768.

Those words held true for the American colonies then and hold true for our free and paid paper industry today.

The newspaper and shopper business is often difficult today. One out-of-state publisher friend sent me a discouraging Christmas message this year. He wrote “with the economy hovering near a depression, and our farmers saved only by a bumper crop two years in a row, business has been tough. We’ve downsized our operation again and again and both my wife and I have taken outside jobs part of the time.”

But if times are tough with publishing associations, how would our business be without them?

Trade groups have always banded together to create a bigger voice in Washington and provide better opportunities at home. Our state and national associations have lobbied for better postal rates, a greater understanding of the need for legal notices, more transparent open meetings, improved independent contractor laws and most importantly, among many other issues, “Freedom of the Press.”

Many state associations, and at least two national press associations, have regularly made an expert available to offer specific advice on how to handle problems with local postal officials.

Others in many associations have time and again traveled to Washington to testify before post office hearings in regard to mailing costs on-time delivery and difficult, sometime unnecessary, postal regulations.

Additionally, paid and free paper press associations have helped both young and experienced editors and publishers find needed staff members, connect with professors and administrators at nearby journalism schools and obtain unbiased information regarding new ideas in management and changes in publishing equipment.

Without our associations, many papers would find it difficult to purchase libel insurance, afford a reliable attorney who understands newspaper issues, embark on industry-organized international tours or benefit from organizational sales of regional, state or national advertising sales.

Most importantly, without press associations, many current and future independent publishers would find themselves without the value of volunteer one-on-one peer mentoring, the sharing of much-needed new revenue ideas, the joy of receiving publishing profession awards and recognition and the enduring social and professional relationships so important to us all. Unfortunately, our associations are an endangered species. The nation’s large publishing chains are often no longer joining state and even national press associations. Others, when they do join, are requiring membership fees at greatly reduced per-publication rates.

“We have our own training, legal and lobbying departments,” some large groups say. “We can’t justify paying for the same services twice. Besides, we want our people at home, at work, and not off at some convention or conference.”

Smaller papers, too, are also not renewing their membership in local associations. “We just can’t afford it”

Will Associations Survive When Local Papers Need Them More Than Ever?

by Peter Wagner

they claim.

But the truth is, “You cannot save yourself into success.” Publishers, like all businesses, need to invest in their knowledge and expand their connections to grow and profit. Our associations still provide solid roads to exceptional profit.

Having worked with almost all the press associations in America and Canada over the last two decades, I am worried about the future of press associations. I often tell participants at my seminars “when I make any paper better, I increase the value and longevity of my publications.”

In a time when so many metro papers are declining and even disappearing, I see a good future for

smaller, home-owned papers. Those publications, with a continued investment in providing local, credible information not available anywhere else, will still be desired and needed for a long time.

And with the growth of local digital publishing, combined with traditional printed papers, that positive future can extend far beyond anyone’s speculation or expectation.

Even the strongest independent publisher cannot stand alone. We need, and will continue to need, our press associations to be the united “grassroots” voice in our communities, state legislatures and in Washington, DC.

Encourage your friends and neigh-

boring publishers currently wavering on the sidelines to join in and support the future of the “free press.” Let’s keep our press associations healthy and effective.

Want more information and motivation to help you tell your publication’s story? Experience more GET REAL straight talk from one of America’s leading newspaper and shopper publishers and sales trainers. Ask your group or Press Association to schedule one or more of Peter W Wagner’s seminars on selling, producing and growing your community paper. Contact him at pww@iowainformation.com or CELL 712-348-3550. Or contact Peter direct for proven sales training for your staff.



The Bob Wright Memorial Scholarship is presented annually in May by the Independent Free Papers of America.

The number and amount of scholarships is decided in December, according to the interest earned that year. The scholarship is based on need and merit. Scholarships will be awarded in 2020. It is mandatory that, the fall semester immediately following selection, the scholarship award winners attend a college, university or school of their choice. The disbursement must be made within twelve (12) months of selection. Money forfeited will return to the scholarship fund. Previous scholarship recipients will only be considered if not enough new applicants apply.

QUALIFICATIONS

1. Applicant’s parent, grandparent or legal guardian must work for a community paper is a current member of the Independent Free Papers of America.
2. Applicant must be a high school graduating senior or a current college student.

3. Applicant is not limited to attending a four-year college. Vocational schools, trade schools and community colleges are also accepted.

4. Applicant shall have manifested an interest in, or an understanding of, the free paper industry at the time of application.

5. Applicant shall have submitted an official Application of Scholarship, complete with all transcripts, recommendations and forms required, to the IFPA Scholarship Award Committee by March 27, 2020.

6. A copy of his/her grades and class ranking and relevant standardized test scores (SAT, ACT, SCAT, PSAT) shall accompany the application. Please indicate which test scores are being submitted. Please describe grading system (i.e. A=, B=, etc.)

IF NUMBER 6 (in total) IS OMITTED, APPLICANT WILL BE DISQUALIFIED. Please stress the importance of class ranking and grading system to your principal or superintendent as the

The IFPA Bob Wright Memorial Scholarship

IFPA Scholarship Committee needs this to fairly judge your application.

7. Applicant must maintain a “C” average to receive Scholarship monies.

Graphic Hooks

By Ellen Hanrahan

Valentines & President's Day... means that February is packed with some special "ad" events. But, don't forget Groundhog Day (February 2), when we rely on a furry animal to predict the arrival of spring.

It's all about the groundhog seeing his shadow... and speaking of shadows, that has become a frequent technique in our ad layouts. When in doubt, add a drop shadow, because they are so easy!

The "Shadow" knows...

This built-in feature in most programs allows me to create some pretty nifty drop shadows. I control opacity, x offset, y offset, blur, etc. So I don't have to purchase any additional "plug-ins."

This feature now has enhanced options: position, add noise, control spread, along with blur and opacity settings.

The increased functionality allows you to create more of your effects right in the program...but don't overdo! Too many drop shadows can create a muddy background. Since newsprint absorbs ink, keep those shadows light and look at the final printed piece to determine your settings.

... But "You" know better

Drop shadows can be used to call attention to a specific area in an ad. It also adds depth and creates an illusion of dimension on a two-dimensional page. We used them all the time—maybe overused, some would also say. With as many as six people in our production/design department, it was possible that too many ads used this effect. So, at times, I attempted to "lay off the use of drop shadows."

Sometimes the art director threatened to call for a drop shadow free week! Good golly, I understood his thinking, but no drop shadows... no way!

Problems with drop shadows, especially on newsprint, is the fact that unless controlled, the area turns "muddy." Because newsprint is so porous, the dot gain is greater thereby resulting in a drop shadow that spreads. Let's take a look at various ways to control our shadows.

Readability

Not all typefaces are effective with a drop shadow. It certainly should not be used with text—best use would be headlines.

In the next column, I've used drop shadows with different typefaces at 28-point type size. Settings are for Object; mode is Multiply at 50% Opacity with Offset of p2 on both X & Y coordinates and a Size of p3.

SET 1

Does this work?
Does this work?
Does this work?

Does this work?

SET 2

Does this work?
Does this work?
Does this work?

Does this work?

In Set 1, I've used typefaces from **House Industries**, the **Ed Benguiat Collection**—(in order) Ed Brush, Ed Gothic, Ed Roman and Ed Script—to give you an idea of choosing the right face for this effect. The 2nd set is the same with the addition of a 1-point stroke added to each typeface.

The Roman and Script faces don't work well, readability suffers (along with legibility). Any type that has very thin and thick serifs will not be a good choice. The thinner the type, the less effective the drop shadow effect.

I've also used small offsets with a small amount of blur. The effect gets a little bit messier, or "smudgy," with greater offsets.

Adding the stroke helps to better define the edge and adds to the 3-D effect.

But look below to see what happens when I double the offset and the blur features. The shadow is becoming "blotchy" and on newsprint, this looks even worse.

Adding a 2-point stroke makes it a little better, but the shadow should follow the contours of the letter forms. The 2-point stroke gives more leeway, but increasing the stroke size may compromise legibility as well as readability. When in doubt, see what it looks like on the printed page.

Does this work?
1-point stroke

Does this work?
2-point stroke

Contrast

Readability relies on spacing and contrast... and contrast comes into play with drop shadows. Your strongest contrast will be black and white (when you are dealing with drop shadows and color, let's just say that there are other factors to consider).

The sample below may be a little extreme but it does demonstrate the contrast. I am using **Myriad Pro Black SemiExtended** with a drop shadow with settings for Object; mode is Multiply at 60% Opacity with an Offset of p2 on both X & Y coordinates and a Size of p4.

SAMPLE 1

WORK

SAMPLE 2

WORK

The difference is evident. In Sample 1, the white letters work much better with the drop shadow than the black letters... the contrast with the white letters calls attention; the black letters appear "smudgy." By adding a 0.5-point stroke to the black letters, I have increased the contrast, but I also have more visual elements going on, which can lead to the "visual clutter" I've addressed in the past.

I have also left a fair amount of spacing between the letters so as not to disrupt the readability— but I am only working with four letters! Most headlines are longer, but you get the idea.

I have more to say...

I have more to say because there is a lot more color in our papers and drop shadows are used with color... and color has value!

Seriously, the value of a color, or what our eye discerns, has an impact on the visual representations we see. A number of the colors that we use are not necessarily the best for contrast because they have a grey value of 50% or so. I will get that list together for you for next time. Remember, it's always about the details!

Final Thoughts

While I may have more to say, I actually do not have any final thoughts... oh wait, may "Punxsutawney Phil" predict fairer weather ahead... I'm done with winter.



Until next time...

Ellen Hanrahan hanrahan.in@att.net ©2020

The Super Salesperson Who Wasn't So Super, After All

by John Foust
Raleigh, NC

Jim was a super salesperson. He was so good that he broke all kinds of sales records at the publishing company where he worked. He consistently brought in more new business than anyone else on the advertising staff. And his numbers always ranked at the top of the weekly and monthly sales reports.

Karen, Jim's former manager, told me that he was the most disciplined team member they had ever had. "Jim was sell-sell-sell all the time. He came to the office every morning at seven o'clock, so he could leave voice mail messages on his prospects' office phones. Then throughout the day, he followed a routine of prospecting and writing proposed media schedules. Everything he did was geared toward closing the deal, so he could move on to the next prospect. If he lost a sale, it didn't slow him down at all. He just brushed it off and kept going.

"Jim generated a lot of revenue, but the picture wasn't as rosy as it sounds," Karen explained. "After he made a sale, he left everything else in the creative department's hands. He was the one who had direct contact with his accounts, but he never developed any kind of strategic guidelines to follow. The creatives were on their own, because there was nothing specific to help them differentiate Advertiser A from Advertiser B. As a result, a lot of those ads didn't work – and advertisers didn't renew their contracts. That put Jim in a position where he had to prospect and sell even harder to make up the lost revenue. It was constant churn."

After a year or so, Jim left for a job in another industry and Karen started insisting on three steps for her team to incorporate in the sales process.

1. Set realistic expectations. "It all starts here," she said. "If people think that putting just any kind of ad in our paper – or on our web site – will automatically bring new customers, they are wrong. It's the sales person's job to establish the right expectations. An ad with a photo, a slogan and a logo will

take many repetitions to create brand awareness. But an ad which promotes a timely offer or seasonal sale will be more likely to create immediate results."

2. Get the right kind of information. "Most advertisers know enough to help us put together workable ad campaigns," she said. "We just need to ask the right questions and make the effort to understand their businesses."

The questions should be simple and open-ended. What kind of results did they get from previous campaigns? What worked? What didn't work? How are they different from their competitors? How can people benefit from us-

If people think that putting just any kind of ad in our paper – or on our web site – will automatically bring new customers, they are wrong.

ing their products and services? That's the kind of information that helps a creative department produce strong ads.

3. Monitor results. "It's common sense to follow up frequently to see how the ads are working," Karen said. "If something needs to change, it's best to find out before contract renewal time."

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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@johnfoust.com ■



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Batteries Included

by Shep Hyken

“There are two kinds of people: Batteries Included and Batteries Not Included.”

That quote comes from Dan Sullivan, founder and president of the Strategic Coach program. If you’ve been following my work, you’ll probably recognize his name. I’ve learned a lot over the years by attending his workshops and coaching sessions. He recently released a book that included many of his quotable words of wisdom. This one—about Batteries Included or Batteries Not Included—resonated with me. If it doesn’t already resonate with you, I bet it will in just a moment.

I have what appears to be an endless amount of energy. Yes, I sleep, but I like to get up and go. People have often compared me to the Energizer Bunny, as I just seem to go and go and go. There’s no doubt I’m a “Batteries Included” kind of guy, and I like spending time with others who come with Batteries Included. Words and phrases I would use to describe this type of person include self-starters, willing to take charge, doers, motivated, up for a challenge, willing to step outside their comfort zone and more. You get the idea.

Then there are Batteries Not Included kind of people. Words and phrases to describe that type of person include negative, pessimistic, little initiative, complainers and energy vampires. That last one is ugly. The old phrase, “They can suck the energy out of the room,” comes to mind here.

Who would you rather be around or work with? (That’s a rhetorical question.) What type of person gets regular or accelerated promotions? What type gets more sales? I could ask a host of similar questions, but it doesn’t take long before you realize that a Batteries Included personality is a good thing, especially in the working world.

Here’s something important to remember. You don’t have to be the Energizer Bunny, full of life and energy, to be

thought of as Batteries Included. You don’t have to have an outgoing, gregarious, life-of-the-party personality. What you do need is a certain type of energy—the type that adds to whatever is happening instead of taking away from it. You must, at minimum, have a joy for what you do, a desire to make things better, a willingness to be open-minded and—this one’s big—the mindset of a contributor.

That’s what Batteries Included people do. They contribute. They add. Batteries Not Included people detract and take away. Ask yourself which category you fall into. If your batteries aren’t already included, find ways to inject that energy into everything you do. You can start

That’s what Batteries Included people do. They contribute. They add. Batteries Not Included people detract and take away.

small. I guarantee it will make a world of difference for both you and the people you do business with.

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

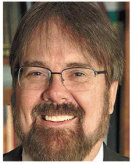


A “batteries included” personality is ideal in creating a positive customer experience.



SPEAKING OF DIGITAL

Trying to determine what's working at community papers



by Kevin Slimp
kevin@kevinslimp.com

I will remember fall '19 as a season of research. I was involved in two major newspaper studies: one related to Millennials for North Dakota Newspaper Foundation and one to determine how community newspapers benefit (or suffer) from their digital presence, as part of a project I led for the Texas Center for Community Journalism (TCCJ).

In my previous column, I shared some of the information we gathered about news consumption among Millennials. Now it's time to share a little of what I learned while engaged in the digital project with TCCJ.

The assignment was simple, or so it seemed. Tommy Thomason wanted to make his final session after 20 years as director of TCCJ his best. He invited Andrew Chavez, New York Times, to visit with the group on Thursday evening about technical and design issues related to newspaper websites. On Friday, I was to spend the day sharing what was working and what wasn't working in digital areas at community newspapers.

Tommy and I held several conversations in the months leading up to the event. Both of us had been to too many workshops promising newspapers unrealistic revenues using new digital bells and whistles. Our self-declared assignment was to give Texas publishers a realistic idea about what was working and what wasn't at community papers.

I was impressed by Andrew Chavez. He was very upfront that what works at New York Times might not work at community papers. He shared

ideas about how papers could track visits to their sites and critiqued websites of newspapers represented at the session, offering helpful tips and ideas to improve their sites. He was also clear that print drives revenue at community papers and digital might best be used to enhance the print product. Andrew and I held private conversations during breaks, and I was glad to know we shared many of the same views about community newspapers and how they might best utilize digital tools.

I began the research for my Friday presentation weeks in advance. In all, I spent more than 80 hours preparing information to share with the group. Naively, I polled newspaper digital folks online, thinking I'd get some great ideas that I could share with the group about growing revenue on newspaper websites. Most of the responses were something like, "Let me know when you figure it out."

When nothing else seems to work, I tend to turn to original research. I created a survey and asked press associations to share it with their members, hoping to get information that would help with my preparations. Within just a few days, almost 700 newspapers responded to the survey of 20 questions related to the digital side of their operations.

Many of the responses were what I expected. About half of newspapers felt their digital presence was beneficial, with 3 percent reporting digital provides significant revenue. Forty-one percent said their digital presence was worthwhile and brought in some revenue. Thirty-one percent of respondents wonder if it's worth the effort to have a digital presence, while another 13 percent seem to think they'd be better off without



an online presence. Another 8 percent report having no digital presence. Add them all together and the responses indicate about half of respondents feel like they benefit from their digital presence, and about half don't.

Most newspapers have a payroll on their websites, and the most common way of charging readers is by packaging a digital subscription with a print subscription. At 20 percent of papers, most of their digital readers subscribe to the newspaper website without a print edition. Seven percent of respondents reported readers pay an upcharge to get the digital subscription along with their print subscriptions.

In Texas, we discussed various ways newspapers are generating revenue online, the amount of staff time spent on digital efforts at community newspapers, ways newspaper websites are created, and dozens of other topics.

The most interesting part of the day, according to the attendees, was live interviews with newspaper publishers and digital gurus around the U.S. who had found unique ways to grow readership and revenue through their websites.

There was a publisher in Nebraska who came up with the idea to combine resources

of ten or so area newspapers into a single website, in addition to their individual sites, allowing each paper to benefit from shared revenue. We spoke with a programmer in New York who directed the redesign of a very successful daily newspaper website. We even spoke with a publisher in Kentucky who was driving significant revenue through live broadcasts of funerals. Yes, funerals.

I could go on, but I'm already over on my word-count. I'll be speaking about my research at several newspaper conventions this spring and summer. If you're in the area, be sure to attend and I'll share more.

Research didn't end in the fall. I'll be in New York next week, working with two community newspapers just north of the city, holding focus groups and meeting with the staff and other groups to find ways to grow their papers.

What's the bottom line of my fall research related to Millennial news consumption in the Midwest, and digital newspapers nationally? As one publisher, who responded that his paper was generating revenue from the digital side, wrote in the comment area of the survey, "Don't give up on print. It's still where the profits are."

“By uniting we stand, by dividing we fall,” wrote Pennsylvanian activist John Dickinson in 1768.

Those words held true for the American colonies then and hold true for our free and paid paper industry today.

The newspaper and shopper business is often difficult today. One out-of-state publisher friend sent me a discouraging Christmas message this year. He wrote “with the economy hovering near a depression, and our farmers saved only by a bumper crop two years in a row, business has been tough. We’ve downsized our operation again and again and both my wife and I have taken outside jobs part of the time.”

But if times are tough with press associations, how would our business be without them?

Trade groups have always banded together to create a bigger voice in Washington and provide better opportunities at home. Our state and national press associations have lobbied for better postal rates, a greater understanding of the need for legal notices, more transparent open meetings, improved independent contractor laws and most importantly, among many other issues, “Freedom of the Press.”

Many state associations, and at least one national press association, have regularly made an expert available to offer specific advice on how to handle problems with local postal officials.

Others in that same national association have time and again traveled to Washington to testify before post office hearings in regard to mailing costs on-time delivery and difficult, sometime unnecessary, postal regu-

lations.

Additionally, paid and free paper press associations have helped both young and experienced editors and publishers find needed staff members, connect with professors and administrators at nearby journalism schools and obtain unbiased information regarding new ideas in management and changes in publishing equipment.

Without press associations, many papers would find it difficult to purchase libel insurance, afford a reliable attorney who understands newspaper issues, embark on industry-organized international tours or benefit from organizational sales of regional, state or national advertising sales.

Most importantly, without press associations, many current and future independent publishers would find themselves without the value of volunteer one-on-one peer mentoring, the sharing of much-needed new revenue ideas, the joy of receiving publishing profession awards and recognition and the enduring social and professional relationships so important to us all. Unfortunately, press associations are an endangered species. The nation’s large publishing chains are often no longer joining state and even national press associations. Others, when they do join, are requiring membership fees at greatly reduced per-publication rates.

“We have our own training, legal and lobbying departments,” the large groups say. “We can’t justify paying for the same services twice. Besides, we want our people at home, at work, and not off at some convention or conference.”

Smaller papers, too, are also not re-

Will associations survive when local papers need them more than ever?


by Peter Wagner

newing their membership in local associations. “We just can’t afford it,” they claim.

But the truth is, “You cannot save yourself into success.” Publishers, like all businesses, need to invest in their knowledge and expand their connections to grow and profit. Press associations still provide solid roads to exceptional profit.

Having worked with almost all the press associations in America and Canada over the last two decades, I am worried about the future of press associations. I often tell participants at my seminars “when I make any paper better, I increase the value and longevity of my publications.”

In a time when so many metro papers are declining and even disappearing, I see a good future for smaller, home-owned papers. Those publications, with a continued investment in providing local, credible information not available anywhere else, will still be desired and needed for a long time.



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