

# TIP

THE INDEPENDENT PUBLISHER

MARCH  
2020

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MISSED!** page  
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**GETTING READY  
FOR MARCH** page  
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SIMPLICITY** page  
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# 2019-2020 Officers



**MANUEL KARAM**  
*Director*

**Genesee Valley Pennysaver**

1471 Route 15  
Avon, NY 14414

☎ (585) 226-8111

Fax (214) 823-8866



manuelkaram@gvpennysaver.com

term expires Sept. 2020



**ERIC MCROY**  
*Director*

**Advantage News**

P.O. Box 867  
Alton, IL 62002

☎ (618) 463-0612

Fax (618) 463-0733



EricMcRoy@AdVantageNews.com

term expires Sept. 2020



**RICK WAMRE**  
*President*

**Advocate Community Newspapers**

6301 Gaston Avenue  
Dallas, TX 75214

☎ (214) 560-4212

Fax (214) 823-8866



rwamre@advocatemag.com

term expires Sept. 2020



**JOYCE FRERICKS**  
*Vice President*

**Star Publications**

522 Sinclair Lewis Avenue  
Sauk Centre, MN 56378

☎ (320) 352-6577

Fax (214) 823-8866



joyce@saukherald.com

term expires Sept. 2020



**SHANE GOODMAN**  
*Director*

**Cityview**

5619 NW 86th Street  
Johnston, IA 50131

☎ (515) 953-4822

Fax (214) 823-8866



shane@dmcityview.com

term expires Sept. 2020



**JOE NICASTRO**  
*Director*

**New View Media Group**

5 Vista Drive  
Flanders, NJ 07836

☎ (973) 252-9889

Fax 240/332-7489



joe@mjmediallc.com

term expires Sept. 2020



**DEBORAH PHILLIPS**  
*Director of Finance*

**The World**

403 US Rt. 302 Berlin  
Barre, VT 05641

☎ (802) 479-2582

Fax (802) 479-7916



dphillips@vt-world.com

term expires Sept. 2020



**JIMBO MARSTON**  
*Sargent at Arms*

**Uncle Andy's Digest**

9 Grove St  
Auburn, ME 04212

☎ (207) 783-7039



jimbo@uncleandys.com

term expires Sept. 2020



**JANE QUAIROLI**  
*Director*

**Kapp Advertising**

P.O. Box 840  
Lebanon, PA 17042

☎ (717) 273-8127

Fax (214) 823-8866



janeq@themerchandiser.com

term expires Sept. 2020



**DOUG FABIAN**  
*Past President*

**Kapp Advertising**

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Lebanon, PA 17042

☎ (717) 273-8127



dougf@kappad.com

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## COMMUNITY PUBLICATIONS NETWORKING EVENT!



**April 23-24, 2020**

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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

Published monthly for the benefit of  
members by Independent  
Free Newspapers of America®

**Publisher**  
Rick Wamre, President

Federal Collective Membership  
Registration No. 1,561,653

**Managing Editor**  
Douglas Fry  
e-mail: douglas@ifpa.com

**DEADLINES:** The next issue of The Independent Publisher will be published April 15, 2020. Deadline for all copy is March 15, 2020. Copy will be accepted on a space-available basis and the publisher reserves the right to edit or reject any material.

**Advertising, Editorial  
& Production**  
The Independent Publisher (IFPA)  
104 Westland Drive  
Columbia, TN 38401  
(931) 922-4171

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# Here's What You Missed at the 2020 Publishers Summit

Wow! I just returned from the 2020 Publishers Summit in Clearwater, Florida. This event was a real home run. Not to mix metaphors but it was a slam dunk, a winning goal, nothing but net, an in-swinging Yorker, getting a 7-10 split. You get the idea.



While I am not a publisher any longer, I learned a tremendous amount from the 12 speakers on Friday and Saturday. Yes, I said 12 speakers. Each presenter had 25 minutes to explain their topic, give three different options, and give the attendees their suggestions on how to best approach and succeed. Then the attendees had 25 minutes to ask questions, compare their own experiences, and combine the 700+ years accumulated experience to formulate a winning strategy. A 10 minute break followed each session. This was to eliminate brains exploding from the sheer volume of great ideas fire hosed into our minds.

We started with Preston Gibson showing the Three (3) Success Factors thriving publications shared. He showed us how to maximize opportunities by evaluating our own publications against those three success factors. See page 17 for more info.

Preston was followed by Deborah Phillips and Jane Quairola giving real-world examples of what is legal, appropriate, and beneficial when developing a work dress code. Got someone with piercings, tattoos, skin tight clothing? Deborah and Jane helped us understand this complex topic.

Joe Nicastro presented next. He had money saving ideas on how to use the internet to streamline and save money at our organizations. Phone systems, email consolidation, cloud based services, and much more. We all came away with our brains hurting just a bit.

After lunch Tom Ward shared his experience selling his publication. He showed us what to do to maximize its value and what buyers are looking for. This session was a real eye opener for us all.

Will Thomas presented on how to use personality profiles when hiring. (See page 17). Rick Wamre then gave us a ton of new ideas on how to obtain free or low cost editorial for our publications. His presentation will help everyone even if they don't currently have editorial content.

Joyce Frericks wowed the crowd with her presentation on how they converted some of their publications to requester mailing publications saving a HUGE amount of money. Her ideas were universally credited with the highest ratings.

That evening we enjoyed an amazing dinner overlooking the Gulf of Mexico. We ate, drank, laughed, and relaxed getting ready for the next day. Next page for more.

## The Editor's Letter By Douglas Fry

March 2020



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*"Kevin Kamen works relentlessly. Whenever he speaks about the publishing business or companies, I pay close attention." Paul Tash, President/CEO of The Tampa Bay Times & former Chairman of the Pulitzer Board*

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Saturday morning started with a delicious, full breakfast. Then Doug Fabian presented their Summer Sweepstakes idea (See page 22).

Douglas Fry then showed the Adobe Creative Cloud, Quark Xpress, and finally the Affinity Suite which costs only \$150 total instead of that much each month. I'd like to say it was amazing but you can't always believe what you read.

Manuel Karam exhibited how CRM (Customer Relationship Managers) can improve your close ratio and more effectively manage your sales efforts. See page 22.

At the end of a great day Shane Goodman wrapped it all up Saturday afternoon. This was an Open Forum during which attendees brought their questions, challenges, missed opportunities so that their fellow publishers could focus hundreds of years of experience and success to give solutions. It was a fitting capstone to the Publishers Summit.

Don't miss out again. Plan now to attend the next Publishers Summit in 2021 on beautiful, sunny, information rich Clearwater Beach, Florida.

*"The event was superb! The sessions were fantastic! Hotel was so much better than last year, food was great. The breaks after each session & dinner were the perfect opportunities to get to know my colleagues better."* ■



In my previous article titled "Using your website to increase print and online advertising revenues", I wrote that very few publishers of small and medium-sized publications are satisfied with the marriage of their print and online products. And that 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?" This article discusses the first half of this question and explains some circulation philosophies suited to small and medium-sized weekly publications with paid subscribers.

You've heard the phrase "newspapers are dying." People have been saying it for 20-plus years. Whether cause or effect, many publications began throwing in the towel in their circulation departments around the same time. Some simply stopped picking up the phone to sell new print subscriptions, not realizing that they're staring right at an oncoming train.

### **CAN YOU USE YOUR WEBSITE TO INCREASE PRINT SUBSCRIPTIONS?**

The answer is yes. Approximately 80% of a newspaper's revenue comes from print advertising, and because advertising revenues increase or decrease based on print circulation, the primary purpose of your newspaper website should be to sell more print subscriptions. When you gain print subscribers, you gain print advertisers, your main source of income. And when you lose print subscribers, you lose print advertisers.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF POSTING ALL ARTICLES TO YOUR HOMEPAGE**

Imagine standing in line at the grocery store. You didn't know you wanted that Twix or Snickers bar until you saw it. The same can be true for your readers. If they can't see your stories, how will they know if they want them or not? If you're only posting some stories (behind a paywall or not), or if you are completely hiding your stories behind a paywall,

(possibly in the form of a PDF/page-flipper), then this article is definitely for you.

Many publishers fear that if they put all their content online, it will push print readers to their website, resulting in decreased print circulation numbers. While this is a valid concern, it is somewhat wrongheaded because if their website was set up properly, they could actually increase print subscription sales.

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Approximately 80% of  
a newspaper's revenue  
comes from print  
advertising

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### **A LITTLE ABOUT PAYWALLS**

A paywall is something that restricts the amount of content to visitors coming to your website. Some newspaper website solutions have paywalls and others don't. Our newspaper website solution has 2 paywalls that work in tandem with each other.

One of the paywalls is a metered paywall, which allows the user to view the first few articles they click on for free. You determine how many articles to give away each week before readers arrive at truncated articles prompting them to subscribe or log in for access.

The second type of paywall is a standard paywall, which allows you to make specific stories free, that won't count against the free stories counted with the metered paywall. Some newspapers use this paywall for free content like obituaries, etc.

### **FISHING**

Instead of looking at the website as competing with your print product, I'd like to compare our goal of increasing

# **Using your website to increase print subscriptions**

by Dan Wilcox

print subscription sales to a simpler activity... fishing! It's a pretty safe bet to say that when you're fishing, you'll catch more fish if you have more hooks in the water. The same is true for your newspaper. The more "hooks you have in the water", i.e. current articles on your home page, the more readers you'll attract.

The goal is to give potential subscribers a reason to frequent your website by giving a few articles away for free, while withholding most of your content in the form of truncated articles, requiring them to log in or subscribe to read the rest of the article. Now that the reader knows what they're missing, they decide they want to read the article, so they subscribe to the print edition which gives them immediate online access to continue reading articles. This method hits it on all fronts; Visitors to your website have a reason to come back (free articles), they can see what they're missing (truncated articles), and you're effectively using your website to increase print subscriptions.

### **IS IT A GOOD IDEA TO GIVE FREE ONLINE ACCESS WITH PRINT SUBSCRIPTIONS?**

Online access should ideally be bundled with every print subscription. You can charge a little more for it if you like, but charging more than a few bucks is unwise. While you may make a little extra money, your circulation department will be more efficient if your print sub-

scribers have the ability to log in and make account updates like renewing their subscription, changing their mailing address, etc. This only happens if you give subscribers online access with their print subscription. (If you have a Periodicals mailing permit, run all pricing strategies by your USPS rep to ensure you don't violate any permit rules.)

A successful strategy might be to price your print and online combo subscriptions just slightly above, or equal to, the in-county print-only price, say \$1 - 3 dollars more. Most readers will simply buy the print and online combo subscription because it offers them a better value.

### **WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL WITH A PDF OR PAGE-FLIPPER SOLUTION?**

There are numerous reasons why your articles should be in a database, generating HTML articles, and not distributed to readers in just a PDF or page-flipper. Some problems with a PDF or page-flipper solution include having an ineffective sitemap, likely not having a Facebook "Share" button or other social media interactivity, losing the ability to have an RSS feed, which makes for a "clunkier" way to read articles online. All of which result in significantly less traffic from search engines and readers.

There's nothing wrong with having a PDF, but it should be the secondary means of browsing articles. The biggest argument publishers give for only using

a PDF to post stories online is time. However, I think most of you would agree that saving 30 minutes a week posting stories isn't worth a decrease in subscription and revenue opportunities.

Another reason publishers may like the PDF or page-flipper is they love the look of their print product, but what they fail to realize is that when the general public is online they tend to prefer reading articles in a webpage format.

If you have a quick and efficient solution, like our system (ROAR), or another system that allows you to post your entire issue quickly, time will not be an issue.

### **DON'T TIE YOUR HANDS**

Lastly, while there are exceptions to this (like students and snowbirds), unless you're a daily, or your subscription prices are high, short term subscriptions may not be the best approach. Some publishers offer 1-month or 3-month subscriptions. However, if the shortest duration readers are presented with is a 6-month or 1-year subscription option, most will still subscribe. This frees up your time because you don't have to convince subscribers to renew in just a few weeks. For this same reason, you should also offer discounts for 2 and 3 year subscriptions.

If you have questions please contact us. [dan@lionslight.com](mailto:dan@lionslight.com), Phone: (907) 223-7872 <https://www.facebook.com/LionsLightCorp/>

## **IFPA BOARD MEETING, THURSDAY FEBRUARY 6, 2020**

President Rick Wamre called the meeting to order at 2:05pm (EST)

Board members in attendance were: Joyce Frericks, Shane Goodman, Rick Wamre, Joe Nicastro, Doug Fabian, Jane Quairol, Deborah Phillips, Manuel Karam and Executive Director, Douglas Fry. Jimbo Marston excused because of airline delays.

Treasurer's Report and 2020 Budget: Douglas

Net Income is up \$20,000. This because of dues receipts and Event Revenue. Expenses for the event are not in yet but expect to break even. Investments are doing well.

Shane made a motion to accept the treasurer's report. Joe seconded it. All in favor. Report accepted.

## **IFPA Board Minutes**



Douglas presented the board with the 2020 budget. Anticipating a positive Net Income this year. Joe made a motion to accept the 2020 Budget. Shane seconded it. All in favor. Budget passed for 2020.

Minutes: Connie

Shane made a motion to accept the minutes of the January 16, 2020 Board meeting. Joyce seconded it. All in favor. Minutes approved.

2020 Publishers Summit: Manuel and Shane

The event is all set. Everything is ready to go. 33 total attendees, which is one third of members. All agreed this is good. Shane suggested sending out a "Here's what you missed" with the survey or in TIP, to possibly increase interest for next time. Thank you to Manuel for the great marketing for the Publishers Summit!

NATS: Joe

Classified system. Whole program is \$6,000. to convert to our system. It's an opportunity to raise classified revenue and provide a different service to our members. Getting papers to sign up is the biggest hurdle. It offers publishers a way to place ads online. Douglas- "would we be competing with our own members?" Shane- "Could we survey members for interest?" Rick questioned if it is a money maker. Douglas will reach out to Will and Chris, possible competition, and send out classified surveys via email and text.

Event Planning

June meeting via Zoom. Douglas suggested stopping conference calls and use Zoom, \$15 month. everyone will need a camera and microphone. Joyce made a motion to approve up to \$500 to get everyone up to speed for Zoom. Shane seconded it. All in favor. Motion passed.

September Event Planning. Digital II

Board felt combining Digital and Print

information for the conference would be helpful. Doug asked what can we market to our readers? Need PR person to represent our papers. Need something to attract people. Possibly a tour? Joyce will research things to do in the area.

Regarding Digital fraud. Shane presented "Planting the seeds of doubt of social media." Board thought it was a good idea to show both sides of the coin. Rick thought this would be a good subject line for the conference.

IFPA/AFCP Update: Rick

At this point we are discussing how to best benefit our members. Joyce said if we are going to work on this we need to know why, why combine organizations?

Highlights of the conversation:

Joe- How would we define membership? Bi laws would have to be changed.

Douglas- Core questions: Financing new organization? CVC audits? Association management? How to fund the association? Board makeup? Future events?

Joe- Should include others. Not all papers anymore. Name should reflect that. Independent Free PUBLICATIONS Association?

Shane- Anyone opposed to opening it up to ANY free publication?

Doug made a motion to change the bi laws to include ANY free publication. Joe seconded it. All in favor. Motion passed. Needs to be presented to membership.

Joe made a motion to change the name from Independent Free Papers of America to Independent Free Publications of America. Joyce seconded it. All in favor. Motion passed. These bylaw changes must be approved by the membership.

Shane- What's next? Committees have met? What is the long term plan? Need

a timeline.

Doug- Options? Stop, take a year to better our organization. Work together on events.

Joe- Solutions for IFPA? Members and revenue. Put efforts into getting members. Need a marketing person with a 2020 ideal to find potential members. Put out a promo piece and follow up with calls and emails.

Shane- Can we send someone to be present at State and Regionals and ask for membership? Doug will ask at SAPA next month. Shane suggested asking for time, show a video.

Douglas- Invite people to our conference at no charge. Or go to other conferences, give a presentation and give them an open invitation. Would every board member be willing to go to one a year?

Douglas will provide members with the dates of the upcoming seven conferences. Cheaper to send a board member than to hire a commissioned sales person.

Rick asked if we could plan the September event with AFCP. Douglas suggested inviting their entire board to the Denver event. Shane will get this done.

Rick asked if we needed a physical meeting in June? Douglas suggested testing the Zoom meeting in February and see if that works. Let Douglas know if anyone needs any audio equipment.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Third Thursday of each month Zoom meeting scheduled for 9:00am EST/8:00am CST now. Members agreed that changing the time to 10:00am EST/9:00 CST would be better. Time changed beginning February 20th.

Deborah made a motion to adjourn, Manuel seconded it. All in favor. Meeting adjourned 6:00pm.

# 5 Tech Tools to Grow Your Publishing Business

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



## SiteSwan Website Builder

### What is it?

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

### How can it help you grow?

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

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

## Ideal Directories

### What is it?

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

### How can it help you grow?

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

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







## PageFlip Pro

### What is it?

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

### How can it help you grow?

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

**How much does it cost:** Pricing starts at just \$1 per page (based on volume)  
[www.pageflippro.com](http://www.pageflippro.com)

## Exchange Classified Ads Platform

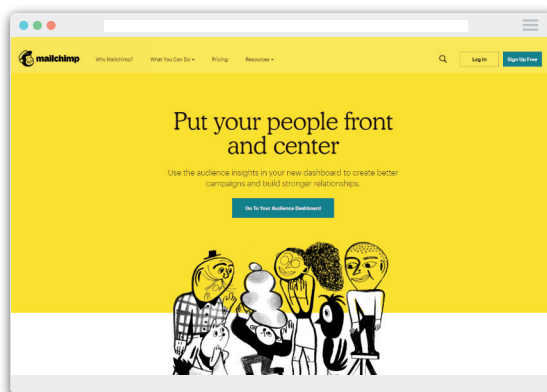
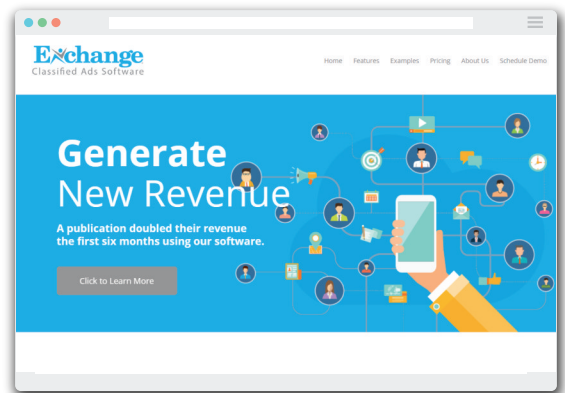
### What is it?

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

### How can it help you grow?

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

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



## Mailchimp

### What is it?

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

### How can it help you grow?

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

**How much does it cost:** Paid Plans starting at \$10/mo (based on subscriber list size)  
[www.mailchimp.com](http://www.mailchimp.com)

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## **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](http://www.ifpa.com)**  
**Click on “Member Benefits” the “Bob Wright Memorial Scholarships”**



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.

dent.

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.

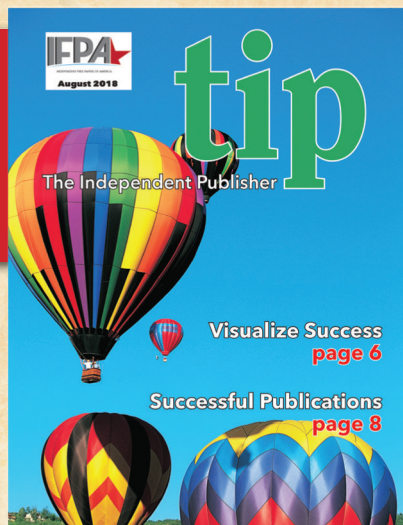
6. A copy of his/her grades and class ranking and relevant standardized test scores (SAT, ACT, SCAT, PSAT) shall accompany the application. Please indicate which test scores are being submitted. Please describe grading system (i.e. A=; B=, etc.)

IF NUMBER 6 (in total) IS OMITTED,

# The IFPA Bob Wright Memorial Scholarship

APPLICANT WILL BE DISQUALIFIED. Please stress the importance of class ranking and grading system to your principal or superintendent as the IFPA Scholarship Committee needs this to fairly judge your application.

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



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November's announcement of the merger of Gannett, once considered the apex of all newspaper chains, and Gatehouse rocked our industry. Gannett was once the strongest voice for the newspaper industry, but it was Gatehouse that absorbed Gannett. Gatehouse, however, has since adopted the Gannett name.

Now McClatchy Company, owners of the Sacramento Bee, Kansas City Star and 27 other daily newspapers across 14 states, has filed for bankruptcy protection.

These announcements and others have been reason for concern for small groups and independent publishers across America.

I believe, however, the future is different for community papers than what awaits many daily publications.

The marketing manager at one of our regional banking chains explained it to me this way: "I won't advertise in a daily newspaper where readers only look for last night's scores and skim the headlines," she said. "But I regularly buy ads in weekly papers that are read page by page and remain in the house a week or longer."

Community newspapers and shoppers are still the most effective way to reach a broad market. They also create consensus, cooperation and "hometown" pride. But community papers, too, also will have to change if they want to remain viable.

### **FIRST, CHANGES NEEDED: THE PRINTED PUBLICATION**

Community newspapers will need to think smaller in their pursuit of advertising dollars and bigger in the variety of services they provide their

community.

The average size of print ads will continue to shrink and so will the number of local retailers who are interested in any kind of traditional advertising.

This can be offset, however, with monthly pages of smaller ads sold in annual packages to health professionals, automotive tire, parts and service centers, women's clothing and decor boutiques, places to eat, drink and party, home construction firms and repair centers and any other common themes a paper's sales manager can imagine.

A themed page can be built around 12 same size ads, published a specific week of every month, at a contract price, for example. The paper should charge its regular rate for the ad space and add \$10 per spot for process color. That charge would cover the printing cost and please the advertiser who is used to paying five to 10 times as much for process color. The lower price and being on the same page with like businesses should guarantee advertiser retention.

An increase in advertising revenue also will come from the creative sales of additional community support pages. These full pages, best produced in full color, cheer on and congratulate everything from the local basketball team's successful season to the induction of an Eagle Scout or Catholic Education Week to FFA week.

The increased offering of community betterment pages opens an entirely new list of potential advertisers including medical and law offices, manufacturing and processing plants, and public service agencies that don't normally do dis-

## **Getting Ready For March**

*by Peter Wagner*



play advertising. But remember, these should always be offered as community support pages and never as “signature” pages.

There are also unlimited dollars available in ads solicited for well-written and produced “keepsake” sections. These are special tabloids produced to recognize a special anniversary of a local community organization, business, institution or industry, the founding or expansion or any other memorable occasion such as local citizens involved in World War II or Vietnam.

Additional publishing income ideas include publishing A to Z Guides for surrounding communities that feature a photo and copy about something exceptional in that town that starts with the letter A, then the letter B and so on. The revenue comes from selling advertising to businesses in that town.

Finally, don’t overlook selling strip ads, at a premium, on the bottom of the paper’s school pages, sports pages, farm pages, society pages and even the local opinions page. A local law firm or community college would be a great prospect for the opinions page location.

Remember, advertisers buy the local newspaper for the audience it reaches. Consider publishing as many editorial and advertising pages as possible in process color.

Nobody buys a black and white television today so why would they be interested in a black on white newspaper?

Finally, consider restructuring the paper’s subscription price. The paper has to be at a price that will encourage the greatest number of subscribers. There are greater margins in ad dollars than subscription dollars. Don’t sacrifice advertising revenue for circulation dollars.

## SECONDLY, THE ONLINE PRESENCE

Community newspapers are never going to completely disappear but there is no denying online publishing is the future.

Here are some of my thoughts on taking control of that future in your local community: Publish a daily blast email newsletter. Have subscribers to this free service acknowledge, when signing up, that the paper also may send them worthwhile commercial messages. Those advertiser emails might include a list of the daily specials at the local restaurants or the advance notice of a business liquidation sale.

Produce a live two-or-three-minute online news broadcast. Schedule two a day, weekdays, at 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. and repeat that broadcast until a new one is recorded. Consider starting with an audio version and later moving to a videocast when

you are able to create a small in-office studio.

Run regular website contests in cooperation with local grocery stores, health centers, local manufacturers and banks. Do an Ugly Sweater contest at Christmas and Mother-/Daughter Look-Alike contest for Mother’s Day. Sell the package to a specific sponsor to cover both the prize and use of the website.

Produce an interactive calendar so individuals can list their upcoming events, closings, location changes, all on your website. Our online calendar is tied to the sponsorship of our full-page monthly printed calendar in our N’West Iowa REVIEW.

Offer live video coverage of your community with specially placed cameras. Position one on Main Street so viewers can watch the downtown traffic. Set another where it is possible to see the current weather conditions including rain, blizzard and wind conditions. Snowbirds really appreciate seeing the weather back home as much as knowing at-home temperatures.

The list is endless, but the future is bright. Lots of changes are coming and many are already here. But don’t worry; instead, get involved. The future belongs to the innovative and determined. ■



Preston Gibson of the Cape May County Herald detailed the 3 Success Factors for Publications. What were they? Do you have them? Only the attendees know these answers for sure.

Will Thomas of Exchange Media Group showed attendees how to use personality profiles when looking to match applicants with opportunities in a company. He even showed how these tools can help manage your existing employees.



# Graphic Hooks

By Ellen Hanrahan

**Happy St. Patrick's Day ...** to one and all, but I don't think I have any of the luck of the Irish (maybe because I am Irish by marriage) as I am working through acute bronchitis (thank goodness for medicines)!

Anyway, maybe I need a pass on spelling this month—please!

## More about Shadows...

So last month we took a look at type and using drop shadows with a variety of typefaces in different weights and which ones worked better. The impact on readability can be diminished or enhanced with such a simple choice of a typeface.

A word about color, because color can alter the impact of the design. The strongest contrast is black and white. I like Pantone Purple, so when using this color with drop shadows, I need to keep it at 100% (for the shadow itself, I can use 60% or less). If I decide to change the text value, I might be creating a color closer to "grey" and thereby diminishing the amount of contrast. Simply stated, keep the color value as strong as you can. Sometimes even a Pantone Orange "reads" as a grey thereby losing the most effective contrast you can use, so think value of colors and not the colors themselves. If you turn the ad into grey scale, you may be able to see the difference. The test for color blindness relies a bit on the ability of the observer to discern slight color changes.

There's a lot of information regarding color theory, but it's pretty intense!

Another reminder... most of our papers use newsprint as the substrate, so you are not even starting out with a medium that will provide the best, most effective contrast. As your design experience grows, you will also learn other ways to provide impact, believe it or not, without a drop shadow!



## Drop Shadow Boxes

My favorite use of the drop shadow technique however, is the use of a photo box. It's a quick attention-getter as well as creating a simple 3-D effect without the worry of readability and can be used in even small ads.

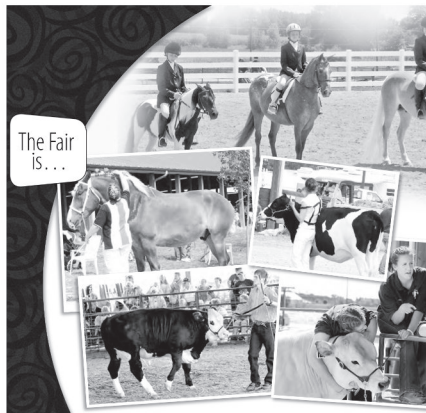
When the county fair, or any special section that requires the use of photos, I've created photo boxes to break up the pages. The boxes below have a simple **3-point stroke border** with a **tint at 4%** to show up. In Box #1, the **Drop Shadow Mode Multiply, Opacity 45%, X & Y Offsets** are **p2** and **Blur is p3**. I rotated the box to an angle of -4°. I filled the "picture area" with a grey tone so you could see the photo position.



I rotated Box #2 to an **angle of 4°** and changed the **X-Offset to -p2** because my light source is coming from above and I'm trying to create the illusion of reality (depth). Watch shadow angles when you use multiple photo boxes.

In the sample below, you can see how this technique was used to fill half a page in our Annual County Fair section in July of 2006. This would also work well when you have a community event with a lot of photos—you don't need a lot of words!

I use a strong graphic for impact, add a larger photo as a background and then layer smaller drop shadow boxes over the entire area for a simple scrapbook effect.



## Drop Shadow Hint

So drop shadows used sparingly are fine, I will now pass on an idea to make them a little better... larger text increases the impact.

Normal drop shadows are nice, but they're too precise, especially when printed. You'll get a much more natural drop shadow if you increase the "Noise" value in the Drop Shadow dialog box a little—you only need 5 or 6% to add a little randomness to the pixels as the shadow fades. I enlarged the samples below so it may show up better. It's subtle...

SAMPLE 1—WITHOUT NOISE

**WORK**

SAMPLE 2—WITH 6% NOISE (a little softer)

**WORK**

## Other Effects

As I was working on the drop shadows under the effects panel I realized just how many choices are available... some good, some not so good. Besides Drop Shadow there's Inner Shadow, Inner and Outer Glow, Bevel and Emboss, Satin and three different types of Feathering. Quite daunting actually as I was trying to create a Cast Shadow in InDesign.

Next time I'll try to simplify some other Effects and give samples of what to expect on type and graphics and also demonstrate a simple Cast Shadow as well.

## Final Thoughts

Drop shadows should not always be the "go-to" fix in order to create impact.

Even the methods of creating the drop shadows in **InDesign** have changed vastly over the years... yes there are more options, but it can also be very confusing, but that can be said for other page-layout software programs being used.

By exploring how a composition can be generated using contrast, unity, repetition, and proximity along with the elements of design can be more beneficial—and readable in the long run.

Sigh, I know it takes time and the ability of Adobe to "improve" my **InDesign** program, at will, sometimes makes it harder for me as well!

Anyway, I have some meds to take...



Until next time...

Ellen Hanrahan [hanrahan.in@att.net](mailto:hanrahan.in@att.net) ©2020



# The Value of Simplicity

by John Foust  
Raleigh, NC

Statisticians disagree on the number of commercial messages we are exposed to each day. Some say 1,000. Some say as many as 3,000. And others claim the number is closer to 20,000.

With estimates all over the map, all I can say for sure is that we live in an over-communicated world which has a short attention span. There is no way that anyone can notice and digest every single message.

This presents a challenge. How can we break through the clutter when we're creating ads? How can we gain – and hold – favorable attention?

1. The first step is to simplify the essential message. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote, "In all things, the supreme excellence is simplicity." Apple's first marketing brochure in 1977 quoted Leonardo da Vinci: "Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication." Simplicity was more than a slogan to Apple's Steve Jobs. It was a requirement. Years later, when he was overseeing the design of the iPod, Jobs insisted that each prototype pass a strict test. If he wanted to access a song or a function, he wanted to get there in no more than three clicks.

Smart salespeople know that it is better to communicate a simple concept than a complicated one. And successful advertisers know that simply stated points have more consumer appeal than long explanations.

I remember a radio spot which featured the sound of a car with a dead battery. For 25 seconds, listeners heard the groaning "err errr errrr" of a battery which was fading. The only words were in the voiceover at the end: "This wouldn't have happened with a DieHard battery." Additional words would have killed the drama. The message was simple and clear.

2. Next, use your audience's language. I remember visiting someone in the hospital and hearing a conversation between two doctors on the elevator. Although I wasn't trying to eavesdrop, I

couldn't help but hear what they were saying. It wouldn't have mattered if it had been confidential, because I didn't understand a single word of their technical discussion. When the elevator stopped at their floor, I remember saying to myself that they would have to speak in plain language when they met with their patients.

It's the same in marketing. We must speak in terms that our target audiences can easily understand.

3. Then eliminate unnecessary words. Thomas Jefferson once wrote, "The most valuable of all talents is that of never using two words when one will do." In other words: edit, edit, edit.

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How can we break through the clutter when we're creating ads?

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The most effective advertising slogans capture the essence of their products in only a few words. "Snap, Crackle, Pop" works better for Rice Krispies than "Our cereal is well known for its distinctive sound." "Nothing runs like a Deere" is more memorable than "John Deere equipment operates more efficiently than the others." And Nike's famous "Just do it" slogan has more impact than "Get into action instead of just thinking about participating in sports."

Simple messaging should not be limited to national advertisers. Local businesses need it, too.

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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](mailto:john@johnfoust.com)

# The Worst Thing That Happens Is Your Customers Love You

by Shep Hyken

What if the worst thing a customer ever said about you was, “I love you!”? Even on a bad day, you’re still so good that they love you! Are you that good? Do customers love you even when there’s a problem or complaint? Here are six ways to make customers love you no matter what!

1 Become customer-focused. This means that in addition to creating an amazing customer experience, every decision keeps the customer in mind. It doesn’t mean every decision will make the customer happy, but the customer is always kept in mind when any type of change is made, from price to changes in features to new and even discontinued products.

2 Be transparent. As you make customer-focused decisions, even ones that might negatively impact the customer, let the customer know ahead of time—and let them know why you’re making the decision. Customers appreciate knowing and understanding when and why something changes.

3 Manage problems and complaints. This is where “the rubber hits the road,” as the old saying goes. You could provide a flawless experience for ten years, which your customer loves you for. But one day there’s a problem. This is judgment day. This is where you earn the right to do business with them for the next ten years.

4 Customers are not always right. This comes from my older material, but it’s worth mentioning again. The customer is NOT always right! But they are always the customer. Whenever they are wrong, let them be wrong with dignity and respect.

5 Avoid transactions. A transaction is a one-time occurrence. An interaction is a relationship that is ongoing. Customers love to feel like they’re part of something. The way to make that happen is to think of them not as a customer, but as a partner. This is a powerful B2B strategy, but it works with

something as simple as buying shoes. The salesperson doesn’t sell a shoe. Instead, they sell comfort, style and emotion. They understand what the customer wants, not just what they say they need. It’s more than a sale. It’s part of something that is bigger and ongoing.

6 Aim for always and forever. Let’s close these customer love tips with one final thought. I’ve written about this extensively, but this is where you want to be. You want your customers to describe you using the word always before something positive. For example, “They always respond quickly,” or, “They are always so helpful.” Reflecting back on number three (managing complaints), they could say, “Even when there is a

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**The customer is NOT always right! But they are always the customer. Whenever they are wrong, let them be wrong with dignity and respect.**

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problem, I can always count on them.” The word always is... always and forever!

There you have it—six ways to make your customers love you. Just in time for The Ides of March! Consider showing your customers a little extra love this day—or any day of the year—by focusing on one of these six ideas. I guarantee it will make your customers love you back.

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





Developing a great sales force is one of the greatest challenges facing newspaper publishers today. The key to finding the right people is to hire people who have the knowledge and skills to do the work that needs to be done. This simple statement can cut down endless hours of training by management when they discover the fact that the new salesperson isn't the advertising salesperson the publication needs.

### **RECRUITING ADVERTISING**

The requirements for the position of advertising salesperson should be very specific. A typical ad might state the following qualifications for the job:

- Creative ad design capability
- Extensive copywriting experience
- Ability to sell advertising campaigns
- Knowledge of all major media

Now you might think—we can train them to do these things. That's easier said than done. If they don't have these qualifications, you will spend countless hours training them. If they can't do what is necessary to be a creative consultant that knows how to sell long range advertising programs, they will revert to the easy way out—be an ORDER TAKER. In other words, just go around and pick up copy, bring it in to the production department, send a proof if requested. The customer will gradually begin to realize that their salesperson is not a knowledgeable and creative consultant but just an ORDER TAKER. Most of the time, this scenario can be avoided if only the new salesperson had the qualifications needed to be a strong and capable advertising consultant for their customers.

### **THE INTERVIEW**

When evaluating applicants on the interview, look for these traits:

- Personal drive—have they a background of determination?
- Empathy—do they have a proven record of bring a problem solver?
- Ability to take direction—accept new concepts—be a good sponge?
- Persistence—how bad do they want the job—are they really applying?
- Appearance—are they properly dressed? Watch what they wear on the interview. Have other members of your management team sit in on the interview and get their opinion of the applicant.

### **DO A BACKGROUND CHECK**

Although many management people will want an applicant to come back for a second (and sometimes third) interview, before calling their references, this is not a good idea. The time to do it is after the first interview. On these contacts, you might find a wealth of information and possibly low marks on work performance, which may cause a quicker evaluation of the applicant.

### **THE JOB DESCRIPTION**

It's very important that an applicant thoroughly understand the job description of the advertising sales position. Many times, much time is wasted on interviews because the applicant didn't completely understand what the job requirements are. There are even cases where a new salesperson is hired before they even know what the job description is.

# **Search and Selection— Recruiting and Interviewing Quality Advertising Salespeople**

*by Bob Berting*

## THE LOOK OF YOUR OPERATION

There are 2 sides to the interviewing process. How attractive is your work-place to the applicant? What are the working conditions? How good is your reputation—what about the morale of your people? Let an applicant walk through your facility and see how they interact with your staff.

## GIVE THE APPLICANT A LAYOUT TO DO

In my opinion, you can't hire people who can't design an ad. If they are to be a professional advertising consultant, they must know how to demonstrate their ideas to their customers.

I would never hire someone where I would have to spend hours training them to do layout and copy.

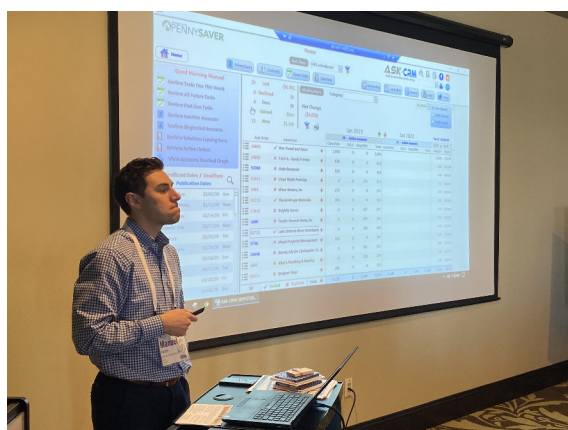
Even if you have a great graphic artist, the salesperson still has to know how to get the customer's personality and image involved in the ad creation. The interaction between the salesperson, the graphic artist, and the customer should produce great creative campaigns.

Newspapers can improve the quality of their sales force and keep turn over to a minimum by developing efficient procedures to identify key job attributes. Effective hiring practices can greatly reduce the failure rate.

See Bob's website at [www.bobberting.com](http://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](mailto:bob@bobberting.com) or 317-849-5408.


# Here's What You Missed

Doug Fabian of Kapp Advertising Services in Lebanon, showed the attendees that Print is NOT Dead! He proved his point by explaining how their Summer Sweepstakes generated additional income during a slow time and gave them 9,372 entries with contact information. More income and thousands of email addresses is a great idea you missed by not attending the Publishers Summit.



Manuel Karam of the Genesee Valley Penny Saver in Avon, NY explained what options are available for CRM (Customer Relation Management) Systems. Who benefited from this session? Everyone! Whether they didn't know what a CRM system is, have one but don't use it much, or even if they have systems and are proficient with them everyone came away with a fuller understanding on how to use these systems to their fullest potential.





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