
INFORMER



**Community
Papers of
Michigan**

March 2020





By Jack Guza
CPM Executive Director

Dear CPM Members,

While CPM and our members have been looking forward to the arrival of Spring, and the always appreciated incremental business the warmer weather brings, we can all agree that life is anything but normal at this time.

I am seeking solid information that will help you to better assist your local retail and service businesses as they face many changes that virtually no one has ever experienced. Your companies still need to publish on your regular schedules and businesses must remain open. I will put this info together over the coming days and get it to all as quickly as possible.

I will be reaching out to the Michigan Retailers Association (MRA) as their members are your clients. I want MRA to know that our association and members want to assist businesses throughout the state to weather the economic storm this virus has brought and I will seek their input and provide suggestions on how we can help each other do just that. I will also be contacting other industry professionals throughout the country for their insight to pass on to our members.

While many have been reporting on local Covid-19 info, it would be beneficial for ALL CPM Members to provide weekly updated info from your community leaders to your vast readership. While there is a plethora of Covid-19 information available online and on virtually every news broadcast, each state is implementing their own guidelines and restrictions (much of which changes almost daily). Small communities need a way of conveying their local messaging to residents, too. By doing so you play a key local informational role to your residents.

With social distancing a reality and the suggestion of limiting travel (even locally), business owners will find it increasingly difficult to attract people to their locations. Businesses need local support now more

than ever to get through these unprecedented times. Business owners should consider utilizing advertorials with their photo and their own words in your publications to describe what they are doing to help customers at this time; maybe they offer curbside pickup, revised hours of operation, etc. They also need to convey that it's important for local support during this crisis, so they will be there for the community when the virus is under control. Perhaps you can propose that your advertisers offer a significant discount on products and/or services through the use of gift cards or certificates to sell now that can be used immediately or for the period of time they deem necessary, if people are not comfortable venturing out. Also suggest that for those who want to buy the cards/certificates but do not want to buy them in person, these can be prepaid and mailed to them as another way of assisting. This will help businesses to secure much needed operating revenue now and help residents to save money as well. The more local businesses that offer this, the more people will be inclined to shop locally. Many of our members are offering discounted rates during this time.

It's important to remind people that you are not profiting from Covid-19 - you are surviving to remain a valued and contributing business partner within your community. Just as your clients' businesses must do whatever they can to remain open during this time, publishing companies must also keep the lights on.

Feel free to call me if you have questions or just need to vent. Please know that your board of directors and I are committed to assisting you any way that we can. We are truly all in this together.

My best,

Jack

Planning for the Worst

What if coronavirus requires our staff to work from home?



Kevin Slimp
The News Guru

I received an email from Dennis Derossett, executive director of Nebraska Press Association, a little while ago. He posed an interesting question. “The C-virus poses a question. What if the staff of a community newspapers must quarantine itself – how would they continue to produce the newspaper?”

I’ve got a pretty good idea Dennis knew the answer to that question, but was interested in my thoughts on the subject.

If anyone knows a lot about publishing with a home-based staff, I suppose it’s me. For the past three years, I’ve run a flourishing book publishing business with a staff that works from home. Don’t get me wrong, we have an office. I just haven’t been there in five weeks. Neither have any of my staff, as far as I know.

I’m a social person. I prefer to work at the office, but business took a huge turn upwards in January and I quickly learned I can get a lot more done if I jump out of bed, go straight to my computer (after a shower), and work till late night.

How do we do it? Pretty easily, actually. Because all of our folks worked out of their homes at the beginning, we’ve learned to do anything that needs to be done, whether at the office or at home. We’ve got bookkeeping, editing, designing, marketing – and even writing books – from home down to an art form.

It’s my guess that my words are going to travel quickly throughout the newspaper world. It’s Wednesday night, March 11. Five hours ago, my son sent word that classes at the University of Tennessee have been suspended until April 3.

Three hours ago, the NCAA announced tournament games will be played without fans. Two hours ago, the NBA announced a suspension of the season for the foreseeable future. The president was on TV, asking folks to prepare. Governors are asking churches to cancel services, schools to close,

and for the workforce to prepare for working from home. Things are happening very quickly.

Knowing many of my newspaper friends will read this on Thursday and Friday of this week, here are my initial thoughts on how to prepare for the possibility that your staff could be required to work from home at some point in the near future.

Hold a meeting with your staff right away. Begin making a game plan to prepare for the possibility the unexpected happens.

Be sure people have the tools at home to get the paper out, in case that has to be done. If you use Adobe CC (the current version), you are in a lot better shape, because the software can be installed on as many computers as necessary, though it can only be running on two computers concurrently. This means your staff could download InDesign, Photoshop and Acrobat at home using your company licenses and design pages since the software won’t be at use at the office.

If you have a large staff (more than a dozen or so), be prepared to purchase some Adobe CC licenses to get the paper out while folks are working from home. It would be disastrous to attempt to find and install older versions of the software on home computers. Adobe CC software is downloaded from the Internet, making it a relatively easy process.

Design a process for getting the paper done. If you already work from “the cloud,” be sure everyone knows how to get to company files from their homes. If not, get a business dropbox account or find some other way to keep everything online so everyone that needs access to stories, photos and ads can get to them

Create a Zoom or GoToMeeting account so the staff can easily communicate as a group when necessary. This will also allow reporters to interview



The Toshiba Canvio Basics 1TB Portable External Hard Drive USB 3.0 is available from Amazon for \$48.

folks online, rather than in person.

Assuming your printer is still printing newspapers during this time (which is a big assumption), you will still be able to write, edit, design and sell ads for your newspaper while everyone is working at home. If you have no way to get your paper printed for a few weeks, plan to create an expanded online edition available to all of your readers to keep them informed.

Remember, if you’re working from home, it’s likely most of your readers are as well. They’ll be scouring the web for information.

Purchase extra external hard drives now. They’re inexpensive (I just checked. 1 TB drives are going for \$45 on Amazon.com), and they will make your life much easier in the case of a quarantine. Plus, they’re good to have, even under normal conditions. Make sure important files from individual computers and servers are kept on these drives, just in case they are needed quickly.

Create up-to-date information for your readers about how to get medical assistance, food, and other vital commodities we generally take for granted. Keep a running list of updated information on your website at all times during a potential quarantine.

So what if no quarantine takes place and you make all these plans for nothing? So what. Good leadership depends, in part, on good planning.

I hope we wake up tomorrow and learn that coronavirus was all a bad dream. But for today, let’s not put off making plans.

Just in case.

The 2019 U.S. Mailing Industry Economic Job Study

By Kathi Rowzie



The U.S. print, paper and mail value chain account for 7.3 million jobs – 4.6% of all employed Americans!

The Envelope Manufacturers Association (EMA) 2019 U.S. Mailing Industry Economic Job Study revealed that the overall impact of both employment and revenue generated by the Mailing Industry remained strong in 2018, the most recent year for which data is available.

The U.S. Mailing Industry includes employment at the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) and the broader business industry like printers, publishers, packaging delivery companies and paper manufacturers that rely on USPS as a supply chain partner.

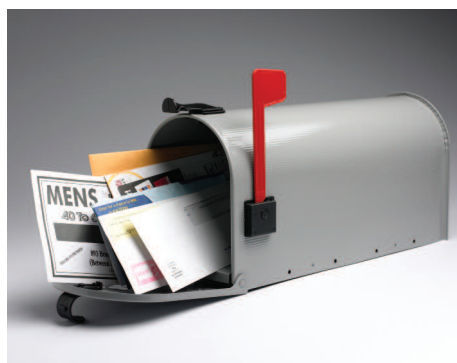
The Mailing Industry accounts for 7.3 million jobs, which represents 4.6% of the country's total employed persons. The U.S. Mailing Industry had \$1.58 trillion in sales revenue in 2018 and accounted for 4.3% of the total U.S. economic output.

A comparison of the Mailing Industry with the U.S. Auto industry shows that they create a similar number of jobs although the Mailing Industry generates about 50% more in sales revenue.

Of the 7.3 million jobs, 80% depend on delivery infrastructure, most of which are operated by the USPS. In addition,

the USPS directly represents almost 46% of the delivery sector's employment and accounts for 8.7% of the total jobs.

Between 2014 and 2018, the number of jobs in the Mailing Industry declined by 209,000 jobs (-2.8%) while the revenues climbed by \$123.4 billion (+9.5%).



There are three main job categories in the U.S. Mailing Industry: mail production and distribution; mail management (associated with handling the mailing of letters and packages) and mail advertised jobs (generated by sales of products and services, both electronic and traditional).

While mail production jobs dropped by 3.8% between 2014 and 2018 due to less traditional mail being produced and mailed, mail and packet

distribution jobs increased by 20% (275,000 jobs). A growth in USPS jobs of 2.8% occurred in this category. Mail management jobs declined by 20% (420,000 jobs) as more and more businesses used email interactions and there was less work associated with handling letters and packages. In the mail advertised jobs category, gains and losses largely offset each other. Traditional mail advertised jobs declined by 3.9% or 122,734 jobs, mostly due to fewer jobs generated by non-catalogue direct sales and direct response magazine sale ads. However, jobs associated with electronic shopping and mail order houses grew by 51% or 105, 578 jobs.

On the revenue side, while producing the mail saw a slide in revenues of \$18.8 billion between 2014 and 2018 due to fewer mail pieces being produced, delivering the mail had a gain of \$9.8 billion. The major gain in overall revenue generated by the Mailing Industry came from the sales of products and services, which rose by \$102.6 billion.

Mailing industry revenue growth combined with declining employment points to growing industry productivity and the delivery system of the USPS remains the core of its success.



By Peter Wagner
Founder and Publisher,
The N'West Iowa REVIEW

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

GET REAL
THE PRINTED PAPER IS STILL A PUBLISHERS BEST ASSET!

"Power Selling Print and Digital Advertising in the Future"

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 display 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. (Continued on page 5.)

Power Selling *by Peter Wagner Continued from page 4*

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.



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.

Designing an ad, or anything for that matter, requires an understanding of the basics as well as an ability to learn everytime you compose something— but you have to learn restraint and...

Don't Overdo

Ad Talk
with Ellen Hanrahan

Brands of the World

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

was www.brandsoftheworld.com

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

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



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

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

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

Options for AM and PM in Print

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

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

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

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

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

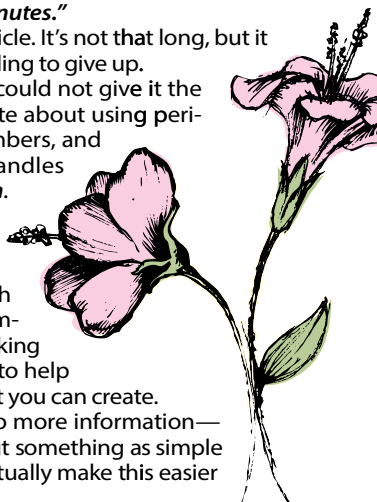
I really encourage you to read this article. It's not that long, but it would take up more space than I am willing to give up.

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

Phone Numbers

Last month the **Bartender** ad replaced the hyphens in the phone number with periods. This is not unusual, and remember the name of the website is "over thinking design," and the author does it for you to help you better understand the visual impact you can create.

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



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

The idea is to simply consider the purpose. This is not a matter of right and wrong, but of appropriateness. Is this appropriate for the ad or the audience (remember, it was an ad for a bartender that we observed). People will be able to read the phone number regardless, so with this issue it's absolutely fine to choose an option that may be slightly less readable in order to create a more appropriate feel. But your reason for using the periods should go beyond the fact that it's a trending practice.

Once more, check out **overthinkingdesign.com** for some very enlightening observations.

Final Thoughts

The "overthinking design" website, in my opinion is a "tongue in-cheek" approach to really getting into the details of visual perception. A huge amount of information that explains historical and visual management. So much to consider... but I am really looking forward to Spring!

Until next month...

I was an art teacher and changed to a graphic design career in the '80s. I write for IFPA TIP, and the CPM INFORMER. For info, PDFs of articles, or have ideas, e-mail: hanrahan.ln@att.net Ellen Hanrahan ©2020



By Bob Berting
Berting Communications

“Create Instant Recognition For Your Advertising”

Today there are sequels to movies and many times a 2nd or 3rd sequel is nowhere near the creative attraction of the original movie. We see automobile styles that are almost look-alikes. We see shopping malls that look alike. Too many retailer newspaper ads look alike. Maybe it's a lack of creativity, or maybe it's a lack of courage to be different and the concern of being too different.

The Optical Weight of The Ad

A good rule of creative advertising is to be “instantly recognizable” either by a distinctive layout style, use of type faces, unique style of art, use of a particular color or some other element that is different from the competition. Another important factor is to understand the optical weight of the ad, which is the upper left quadrant of the ad. Creativity can start in that quadrant namely with a newly designed logo, the start of a provocative heading, a dominant eye-catching graphic and possibly spot color.

Focus Groups

What's really interesting is how focus groups look at high profile retailer advertisers and how they perceive one store versus another. A series of full page ads might be presented with the logos covered. The members of the group would be asked to identify which ads belonged to which stores. Surprisingly few made the right identification as to store identity.



Encourage your advertisers to identify themselves more creatively

As part of your consultative process, you must provide guidance on how to accomplish that process. Awaken their creativity. Challenge them to be different. Here are a few suggestions:

- Localize their business: use the name of the city or shopping community in the signature section of their ad or an illustration of an immediately recognizable landmark place nearby.
- Use testimonials and pictures of actual customers praising their business merchandise, or service (you may need a signed release to do this).
- Use the business salespeople in the ads—talking to customers or individually talking to the reader.

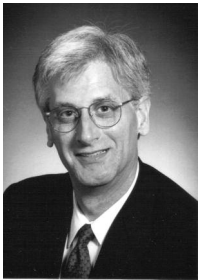
• Use humor, particularly a humorous slogan. Also a campaign can be developed using clever and provocative headlines. Readers will gravitate to that type of advertising because they are intrigued by this approach and want to see what will happen in the next ad.

Sometimes getting attention can be as simple as creating a large dominant headline with a lot of white space and very little copy. Never underestimate the power of being unique and different. Your publication can stand out in the marketplace by constantly taking the creative initiative.

Bob is the author of 3 best-selling e-books for the newspaper industry “Dynamic Sales and Image Power”—“Advanced Selling Skills For The Advertising Sales Pro”—and his latest e-book “Power Selling Tools For The Advertising Sales Consultant”. Any one book is 19.95...any two books is 35.00...all three books are bundled at 49.95. You can order Bob's books on his website: www.bobberting.com.

Read Bob's books and discover how his vast experience and know-how can help you achieve much more business for you and your publication. You'll greatly benefit from the wisdom of one of America's top advertising sales experts.

Bob is a professional speaker, advertising sales trainer, publisher marketing consultant, and leading columnist in many national and regional newspaper trade association publications. He is the President of Berting Communications and can be reached at bob@bobberting.com or 317-849-5408.



By John Foust
Raleigh, NC

Ad-Libs

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

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 using 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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