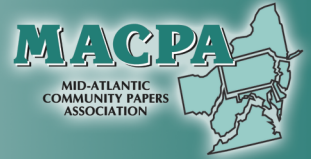


JUNE MESSENGER
VOLUME 12 - ISSUE 3



Save The Date

Mid-Atlantic Community Papers Presents

Beyond Survival

Don't Look Back,
Look Ahead

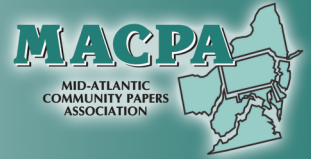
March 19 & 20, 2021 • Carlisle, PA

MACPA

MID-ATLANTIC
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More Details Coming Soon

PRESIDENT MESSAGE



MACPA Messenger



Dear Fellow MACPA Members,

Two weeks ago, our publishing company had decided that we would take a week off the first week of June to prepare for a reopening of our publications in print. We knew we had lots of things to get ready.

By the weekend, Philadelphia was hit very hard by protestors who were overwhelmed by the horrible event of the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis and the feeling of injustice that many African Americans have expressed publicly and privately. Two of our reporters rightly asked us to go to press. News! News! There is too much news happening!

And right they were. The protests continued. And within a day, the looters arrived, mysteriously coming from around the country to so many of our American cities, Philadelphia being one of them. And they hit hard. They arrived here to destroy businesses rampantly throughout many areas of Philadelphia, both affluent and inner city communities. The destruction and looting of supermarkets, shopping centers, main street businesses, small and large, is hard to describe. The emotional impact has taken a toll on everyone here.

What I learned is how seriously our reporters and writers view the importance of their work to the community, and how it is essential for society to have an “independent” record of the history of what transpires week-to-week and year-to-year.

The support that MACPA gives to our publishing network is valuable for each of our publishing operations. It is valuable for us to connect together in our online meetings but also in our actual conferences and face-to-face meetings, so that we can share our experiences in business together helping one another to survive.

We began the planning of our upcoming conference next spring. It is aptly named “Beyond Survival 2021!” and will take place next March 2021 in Carlisle, PA. We hope that all of our members will attend. We are already starting to put in place our keynote speakers, TLI training for sales and management staff, and ample time for round-table discussions. And, we are planning some fun, and R and R, as well!

The board of directors is also hoping to have a face-to-face this fall in Carlisle, at the same location as our conference will be next year. We hope this is a little closer for our Ohio members and those publications that are on our membership’s western borders.

Alyse and Kasey have been working hard to come up with new and creative revenue streams for our members and to “hold the fort!” Thank you both for your efforts and especially for your positive attitudes.

Our impact and benefit to our communities is real. “Our spirit remains resilient.”

Best,

Claudia Christian, President of the MACPA Board of Directors

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(christian@pressreview.net)
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(mbehle@pa.net)
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(journalruth@gmail.com)
(term expires 04/21)

MACPA OFFICE

10 Zions Church Rd, St 201
Shoemakersville, PA 19555

1-800-450-6631
info@macpa.net
www.macpa.net
www.macnetonline.com

SALES CORNER: SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER PUBLISHER SHARES THE SECRETS OF SUCCESS



MACPA Messenger

By Kevin Slimp

Just before the world turned upside down in early March, I was making preparations to speak at the Kansas Press Association Convention. One of my keynotes had to do with why some papers were experiencing success, while so many papers were decreasing in readership and revenue.

To get ready for the session, I interviewed several successful community newspaper publishers in the U.S. and Canada. My plan was to show snippets of the interviews with the Kansas audience. Little did any of us know that the Kansas convention wouldn't happen in April (thankfully, it's been rescheduled for later in the year), but the information I gained will come in quite handy when I begin speaking at conventions again this fall.



As I visit association conventions, there are names that pop up again and again when the discussion turns to successful newspapers. One such name is Jason Sethre, publisher of the Fillmore County Journal in Preston, Minnesota. Jason

and his wife, Amanda, purchased the Journal in 2009 after 15 years in the corporate newspaper world. Amanda serves as associate publisher.

Jason and I visited for 30 minutes about the Fillmore County Journal. He and Amanda purchased the paper at a time when newspapers were beginning to struggle from the recession. Since that time, the Journal has grown 80 percent. Most of that comes from the newspaper itself, while another 30 percent or so of the growth comes from other areas like special sections, a website division and tourism guides.

The Fillmore County Journal has a lot in common with other community papers, but it does a lot of things differently. For instance, obituaries are free. Jason told me the paper runs more than 300 obits each year. "People are always amazed when they find out we don't charge for obituaries."

One thing that surprised Jason, after coming from the corporate world of big dailies, was that weeklies and shoppers lack sales goals at the Journal. "When we bought the paper, there were no sales goals," he told me. "I wasn't used to that. That's not what it was like where I came from. But, sales increased that first year and I decided to run the paper without sales goals after that."

Having worked with thousands of newspapers as a consultant, I was surprised when Jason showed me a word search special section. Yes, a special section filled with word search puzzles.

"There are 32 advertisers in the section," he explained, "and all of the ads were designed and placed on pages before a single ad had been sold."

Apparently, that's standard practice at the Fillmore County Journal.

"With every special section we do," Jason continued, "we ask ourselves, who we can get that we don't already have as an advertiser?"

The sales team goes into action, gives the designers a list of businesses, ads are created and placed on the pages, then taken out and shown to potential advertisers. Those who don't buy the ad, for whatever reason, get the ad for free. It's not as risky as you might think. Jason explains that for every 20 advertisers they visit with a completed section, 16 to 18 will buy the ad.

"I'd rather place an ad for a potential advertiser than a house ad," Jason told me, "because most of them will become regular advertisers after we do that."

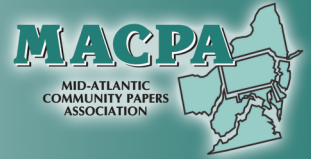
The Journal team consists of 18 staff persons including four full-time designers, "six or seven" reporters, sports and news editors, web designers and publishers.

I asked about having four designers at a small community newspaper. Jason explained that everything is designed in-house. Sure, he is pestered almost daily by vendors trying to get him to outsource work.

Kevin Slimp continued on page 5

SALES CORNER: SELLING IN A PANDEMIC

10 STEPS



MACPA Messenger

By Mark Hunter, *The Sales Hunter*

Whether you like it or not, the pandemic we find ourselves in is not going away any time soon. You can achieve far more success than you realize by just sticking to a proven set of actions. I've laid these actions out in 10 steps. Let's go through right now all 10 steps to successful selling in a pandemic.

1. Uncover the short-term need

Customers are currently zeroed in on the short-term need. You do not want to be out there selling the long-term solution. It's all about the short-term. Keep things dialed-in.

2. Keep it simple

This is not the time to sell the complex solution or the master plan that's going to solve everything. What you want to do is provide them with the very simple solution. Make it an easy, small sale that they can digest quickly and digest right now.

3. Involve the least number of people possible

Again, the last thing you want is this thing having to go to committee and involving a bunch of other people. If you do that, it's just going to involve too many things, and it's going to slow down the entire process. You want speed. Speed sells now more than ever.

4. Ensure availability

Surprisingly enough, the supply chain is broken in many industries. And yes, it may be broken in your supply chain, too. That being said, it's important to give the customer confidence that when they place their order no matter what the product, it will happen when you say it's going to happen. Again, this is important because everybody's timeline is extremely short right now as states and communities begin to reopen. There are so many variables in play right now; therefore, you have to make sure it happens when they need it.

5. Flexible implementation but with urgency

This step builds upon the preceding one of ensuring availability. So, what do I mean by flexible implementation? The customer may say, "Hey, we can put this in place here now, but we've got to wait on this." That's okay. Yes, it's okay. But what you don't want them saying is,

"Well, you know what? Let's go ahead and buy it, but we can't really do anything for 90 days...120 days." No! You must create urgency, so it has to come back to really, truly understanding their short-term need. Remember number one: short-term need that correlates to a sense of urgency of why they need to do business with you right at this moment.

6. Think long-term engagement

Now, this doesn't contradict what I've been saying. Trust me, no. By creating a sense of urgency now, we are keeping it simple and making it flexible; however, my whole plan is to establish long-term engagement with the customer. I might be looking to help you today, yet my vision is to help set us up for the next meeting. Remember one of the lines I love to use that also wrote in my new book, *A Mind For Sales*: "there's no such sale as a good sale unless it leads to the next one." That is what you're doing right now.

7. Treat prospects the same way that you treat your customers

Now, you may have prospects that are just not in a position to buy. They just can't do it, but you know what? Keep them informed. Keep them engaged, and continue treating them the exact same way you treat your customers. That way when they are ready to move, they will move with you.

8. Keep to a routine, don't give up

It is very easy to develop bad habits, as we move our way through this pandemic. You have to stick to a routine. You may say, "Hey, this just isn't working." No, no. Don't give up! Focus on your sales plan now more than ever. It's absolutely essential. This is why I say prospecting is essential now more than ever. It's easy to sit there and say, "I don't have..., prospecting isn't..." No, because you never know how quickly things change. You need to be the player, you need to be the company, you need to be the solution; because you are your customers' R&D department. It's your job to be there for them.

9. Earn trust and confidence in everything you do

You can say: "Hey, we've helped many other companies just like you work their way through

Mark Hunter continued on next page

Mark Hunter continued

this situation. Now granted, we're in new territory. Totally get it, but..." You've seen this before in other situations in other times, and again, what you're doing is gathering your collective wisdom for the current situation. Let the customer know that. And not by bragging or being arrogant, but simply saying, "We've seen this with other customers in other forms. Here's how we help people through this." That gives them confidence. This is crucial with both customers and prospects. It's all about trust. Trust is absolutely paramount to everything. Think about what's going on out there in the world today in terms of politics, in terms of medical/health, in terms of economics. What voices do you respect? It's the ones you trust, right? You have to be the one to trust; how do you create trust? Because you're empathetic, you're listening to the other person. You're hearing what they're saying and you're conveying your confidence in your ability to say and do what you say and do, what you're going to do.

10. Your attitude drives your results!

Let me tell you something, your attitude is the foundation of everything. That's why I put this one as number 10. It's the big reason that goes along with all other 9 steps. This final and most important step is the reason for my book, A

Mind for Sales, because your attitude drives your results. If you have a bad attitude, you'll never see opportunities. You will never see what's happening out there. If you have a good attitude, it is amazing what you'll discover. Ok, so how do you have a good attitude? You begin each day by being thankful, thankful for the opportunities that will come before you. Be thankful that you have people to reach out to, be thankful for the people you've been able to help, and you know what? It's incredible how that one simple activity changes your view.

You can't change what's going on out there. You can't. All you can do is change how you respond to what's happening around you and to you. That's your objective. Stay focused, and your focus is to stay focused on your focus. What is your focus? You! Don't try to change the world, because let's be real, you can't change the world; although, you can change those you come in contact with by having the best attitude.

I hope these 10 things have helped you! It really is a great opportunity to be in sales. I've never been more enthused about sales because sales will be what drives the economy and drives us back up to being an economic powerhouse, the economic machine that you know we're all capable of having. We'll get there, and it all starts with you in sales.

Kevin Slimp continued

"We're in a rural area with a county population of 20,800. People do business with us because of the people who work for us. It would be foolish for me to outsource design because we would lose business."

I asked Jason about any other sales hints.

"I feel one of the lost arts in general is going out to talk to people. That's how we get a lot of our story ideas. I often learn of a story while talking with a potential advertiser. That's a huge part of our success."

Jason wasn't thrilled to hear about newspaper groups in other parts of the country dropping their sports staffs. He said, "That's a lot of shortsightedness."

In addition to covering sports for seven school districts, the Journal covers arts, academics and other areas of student life.

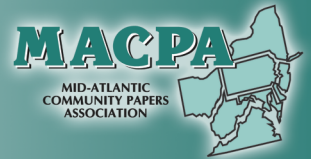
I didn't want the conversation to end. I asked Jason if there was anything more he could share that might be helpful to other newspapers.

"I think another thing that has been very important for us is that we pay very well. We pay 35 percent more than other papers in our region. We give annual raises every year."

Jason believes keeping good people pays off. "We spend more on staffing than most papers, but if you want to keep good people, you have to take care of them."

"Our company philosophy," Jason continued, "is that people are more important than profits. If you take care of the people, the profits will come."

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MACPA Messenger

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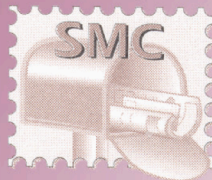
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