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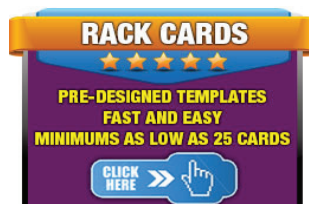


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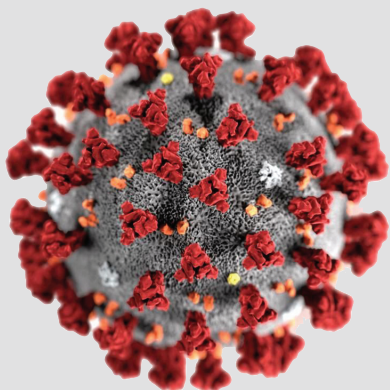
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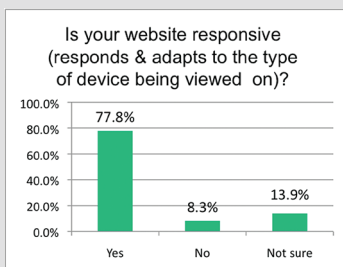
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INK features:



11 | COVID-19 ALTERS BUYER BEHAVIOR



14 | THE SURVEY SAYS...

35. Which of the following types of RESTAURANTS do you or the members of your household plan to use in the NEXT 30 DAYS? (Check all that apply.)

Value	Percent	Responses
Fast Food Restaurant	46.4%	307
Family Style Restaurant	53.2%	352
Food Cart/ Food Truck	5.0%	33
Fine Dining Restaurant	33.8%	224
Restaurant with Lounge or Bar	26.9%	178
Pizza Restaurant	53.8%	356
None of the above / Does not apply	19.3%	128

16 | CURRENT CONSUMER TRENDS

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COMING next month

The October issue of INK will be looking at Cancer Awareness and what publications are doing to involve themselves in this important initiative. As always, there will also be a healthy dose of current events to keep you informed on industry news.

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MISSION STATEMENT
 Bring news and resources to the attention of the free paper industry by publishing a responsible quality magazine.

DEADLINES: The deadline for classified ads, display ads and editorial is the 4th of every month.

Free Paper INK is dedicated to keeping the industry informed on key issues, topics and industry news. If you have any items of interest that should be shared with people throughout the Free Paper Industry, simply email them to loren@afcp.org. We welcome your input, appreciate your readership and look forward to your contributions to our content.

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Are our **publications** convenient for our **readers**?

AS THE PANDEMIC GRINDS ON, the concern for the health and future of many of our core advertisers is jeopardized. Restaurants, beauty salons, fitness related businesses and so many more are trying to adapt and stay viable. This struggle has put a great strain on community publications in all markets regardless of their size, their market type or their state.

This issue will take a look at what trends are affecting consumer behaviors and how that will impact advertising and publications going forward. The one thing that stood out in almost every discussion of consumer trends I found researching this issue is our constant search for increased convenience in almost every aspect of our lives. It drives so many decisions we all make as consumers. Business decisions and personal decisions all have to pass through the "convenience filter" before any options are considered viable or not.

So many of today's product success stories are centered around making life more convenient in our busy schedules. Apple designs all of its products with a focus on convenience. Single serve coffee makers are now in over 50% of U.S. homes based exclusively on convenience. Google established itself driven by delivering the convenience of searching for any type of information. Alexa delivers convenience of access to those internet searches, lists and so much more. Convenience, convenience, convenience – people buy convenience.

With that being said, we need to be asking ourselves... what are we doing to make our publications more convenient to our readers? We often assume that delivering the information to their home defines



LOREN COLBURN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

our convenience factor, but is that enough? If we step outside the box of traditional thinking, what can we do to make our publications more reader friendly from a convenience perspective?

How many publications offer an index for readers to quickly access information? Is there an index to each advertiser? Is there an index to grouped information by subject (real estate, employment, automotive, etc.)? Do we group information? Do we group classified ads or include sub-groups for classified ads? Those would all make the publication's information much more convenient to locate with each issue.

Now some of you may be thinking, *I want my reader to search through my paper from cover to cover to find what they are looking for!* That is the same type of thinking that Kodak used to justify film-based cameras rather than embracing the transition to digital-based cameras. After developing the first digital camera in

1975, they dropped the product for fear it would ruin their main income – photographic film. By trying to protect their traditional product offering, they took themselves right out of the photography industry as the rest of the world developed and advanced digital photography. By trying to protect your traditional content theory in the face of your reader's desire to maximize convenience, you may get marginalized by more convenient product offerings within your market.

Consider other ways to deliver additional convenience through your publications. How about reviews that provide local, reliable, honest information for your readers? Restaurant reviews, service provider reviews, business reviews, website reviews – all based on delivering local market information in one convenient place. It has worked for Yelp, Trip Advisor, Angie's List and many more. The difference is that you deliver local like none of those providers can! The more local information you deliver, the more reasons to open your publication every time it comes into the home.

Therefore, our most significant challenges are to determine what we need to do to increase convenient access to the information our publications already provide, and to maximize the amount of local information we can offer about our markets. Loyal readers trust the information they find within your pages. Your job is to provide as much information as your readers need in order to place a high value on opening the publication for every issue.

If you deliver information to your readers and readers to your advertisers, there is no reason for media buyers not to believe... "If it's free, buy it!" **INK**



Add a RECURRING REVENUE STREAM with SiteSwan

IF YOU ARE LOOKING TO BOLSTER YOUR BUSINESS model and add an easy stream of recurring revenue through digital, AFCP associate member SiteSwan may have just the opportunity you're looking for.

Launched in 2011 by JB Multimedia, SiteSwan is a website designing platform that was created in direct response to what publishers were saying was needed to fill missing pieces of the marketing puzzle.

Initially, the team behind SiteSwan contracted with publishers to build websites for their advertisers. But a few months into the new business model, it became evident that each of these small businesses wanted basically the same thing – an informational, lead-generating website that tells the world what they do, what makes them special, how to contact them – and puts their best foot forward 24/7.

With this understanding came the realization that publishers could build these simple websites themselves – for their clients – with the right software, and SiteSwan was born. It was built specifically so that a publisher's design staff that was already familiar with assembling the elements of ads, could build stunningly beautiful websites without having to go to school to learn coding or programming.

SiteSwan offers over 100 industry-specific, professionally-designed website Themes for just about any type of business likely to advertise in print: lawn care, power washers, beauty salons, carpet cleaning, auto repair, doctors and dentists, law firms, restaurants, wedding planners, realtors and more. Each SiteSwan Theme isn't just a pretty homepage – it's a full five-page website preloaded with designer crafted, expertly written, search-friendly content appropriate to the small business. That means that with just a few clicks, a website can actually be created in less than one minute.

"SiteSwan provides publishers with the equivalent of a spec ad in website form," said SiteSwan President Justin Gerena. "Using the show-and-sell tech-

nique enables salespeople to make a very simple, straightforward sale."

SiteSwan has evolved over the last nine years to meet publishers' needs. The most significant addition has been a system-generated prospecting list. After the publisher signs in, they input the zip code and a key search term such as "restaurant" into the Local Prospecting Tool, and the system generates a list of prospects within an adjustable-mile radius. Along with the name, address, and phone number of each business, the system also rates the business's mobile presence. Many local businesses who already have

a website presence have a horrible mobile site, so the ability to quickly generate a spec website can show them what a beautiful website they could have if they choose to work with you.

"The most difficult thing to convey [to publishers considering joining SiteSwan] is that the website for a small business owner is the hub of the marketing wheel," said Gerena. "Everything stems to and from the hub like spokes on a wheel. When you own that relationship with the hub of the wheel, you instantly have access

to all of the other marketing and advertising that client is doing – be it print advertising, social media marketing, text message marketing – it all stems to and from the website. You understand your client so much better when you own that relationship and it gives you access to understand what else you should get into. It gives you the ability to start offering other services, like Reputation Management (which is also built in to SiteSwan as a great add-on service) with no risk, because you've already validated the need for it from existing clients."

Because SiteSwan is a white label platform, the websites you build and sell to your clients will all be under your own brand. You pay a flat monthly licensing fee to use the software, then set your own prices

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SiteSwan President Justin Gerena

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Getting to know The Monadnock Shopper News

THE MONADNOCK SHOPPER

News, a familiar fixture in the Mount Monadnock area of New Hampshire, has an interesting history.

In 1958, the first supermarket was built in the county. The grocer hired a public relations firm who told him that his ads needed more circulation than the daily newspaper could provide. They suggested he mail a flyer with his prices to the surrounding areas that would frequent the supermarket, and so The Keene Shopper was launched by the grocer. However, it was quickly losing money with no one selling ads, so the grocer offered it for sale.

Gabriel and Barbara Shakour bought The Keene Shopper for \$50 and started their publishing career in the basement of their home. Present-day Publisher Mitchell Shakour was just five years old at the time, so he literally grew up in the business from his basement playroom, watching salespeople come and go and listening to his parents' discussions.

While Gabriel was a good salesman, he didn't know anything about newspapers and needed credibility. So he lured a very talented artist away from the local daily by offering him a 20% raise.

As the paper grew the Shakours realized that in order to serve their readers best, they needed to provide local news along with advertising for products and services. The name of the paper was changed to The Keene Shopper News to reflect this new direction, and editorial with community news and events was added. In 1965, the Shakours bought an office building and moved their business out of the basement of their home.

By 1980, over 2/3 of the circulation was outside the Keene city limits and the name of the publication had become an obstacle to ad sales with customers who wanted more circulation outside of Keene. Though he was initially opposed to changing the name of the paper to The Monadnock Shopper News



Publisher Mitchell Shakour was just five years old when his parents bought the paper, so he literally grew up in the business.

due to its similarity to the daily paper's name, Mitchell Shakour now says it has proven to be a good decision.

"We have always reached a larger area than the daily," he said. "We currently mail over 40,000 papers, only 10,000 of which are in Keene, as compared to 7,000 copies the daily publishes." Today, The Monadnock Shopper News reaches over 60,000 readers weekly with its mix of 65% advertising and 35% editorial content. Readers look forward to the many regular columns and special sections, but the undisputed favorite special section is the Established Edition.

For 59 years now, the locally loved Established Edition has spotlighted and introduced local businesses. The Historical Society

of Cheshire County and members of the community submit photographs of businesses, and a Facebook group crowdsources answers to local history questions. Tantalizing images, articles and tidbits of local history are sprinkled throughout the paper, and every business in the paper boasts "established in" or "since" the year of its creation. The oldest continually-operated businesses appear in the first pages, with newer businesses being added on a rolling year-after-year basis throughout the 32-page special section. The first page of the 2020 issue starts with an ad from a church established in 1738, and the last page contains ads from businesses established in 2020. With its long history and all the ads the exact same size and price, the Established Edition is an easy sell.

The Monadnock Shopper News's commitment to community is further evidenced by its Reader's Choice Awards special section. Each year readers from the Monadnock Region vote on their favorite shops and services. In a unique twist on most Reader's Choice Awards contests, voters are able to write in any business or individual they wish. In addition to categories you'd expect to see such as

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restaurants and services, additional eclectic categories in the 2019 survey included fine art, charity events and contributors, historic buildings, columnists, politicians, radio personalities, teachers, and apple orchards.

"With the pandemic, we had no plans to publish the Reader's Choice Awards this year," said Shakour, "but people have been calling the office demanding to know when it will be published, so it will be coming out next week. People are excited about it, and it is helping to stimulate the local businesses."

After receiving his BA and Masters degrees in journalism from Syracuse University, Shakour wasn't quite ready to join the family business. He took some time off to travel around the world on a budget, hitchhiking and staying in hostels. A year

and a half later he was tired of traveling and ready to settle down. He knew that if neither he nor his siblings took over the family business his parents would sell it, so he joined the paper in 1978 and worked with his father until his dad passed away in 1986 and he took over the helm.

Shakour is proud of the way The Monadnock Shopper News has handled itself during the pandemic, directing its mission towards helping people return to normal.

"We have more readers now than ever," he said, "and I'm enjoying my work again. We're really helping our community, and the community appreciates the shopper. We are committed to doing what we can to help local businesses, and that's the

sweet spot to success: putting yourself second and your businesses and employees first. That's what it's all about. Without them, what do you have?" **INK**

"We are committed to doing what we can to help local businesses, and that's the sweet spot to success."

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When you join SiteSwan, you receive a professional marketing website on your own domain to promote your business, attract customers and generate leads. As part of the package, pre-designed sales and marketing materials such as flyers, brochures and infographics are provided to share with potential customers. Ongoing training and support is available via how-to videos, live webinars and online support to help you master the platform and grow your business.

"The amount of trust a small business puts in their web designer is astonishing. You get questions on all kinds of things. If you can effectively advise them, you've opened up the opportunity for so many other services. It's truly empowering," said Gerena.

SiteSwan is more than just a website builder. It is a complete web design business-in-a-box. Call 1-800-462-9814 for additional information or visit www.siteswan.com and take a look around at the beautiful websites you could be creating and selling in just minutes. **INK**

IBM Study:

COVID-19 is Significantly Altering U.S. Consumer Behavior & Plans

Personal mobility, retail shopping and event attendance are among the areas most impacted.

FINDINGS FROM AN IBM INSTITUTE FOR BUSINESS Value (IBV) survey of U.S. consumers reveals shifting personal behavior and preferences resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The study polled more than 25,000 U.S. adults in the month of April to understand how COVID-19 has affected their perspectives on a number of issues, including retail spending, transportation, future attendance at events in large venues, and returning to work. The results revealed that not only do U.S. consumers surveyed plan to make significant changes in the way they go about their lives and work in the wake of the virus, but also that there tend to be stark regional contrasts about those plans depending on where those consumers reside.

Many consumers indicated that they plan to reduce their use of – or forgo entirely – ridesharing and public transportation. They also indicated they are less likely to attend large events once the crisis abates but are more likely to attend sporting events. Many respondents also expressed changes in the way they will shop and spend their money, including an increased willingness to use contactless payment technologies when shopping, alongside a reluctance and hesitation to make new car purchases due to personal financial concerns resulting from the pandemic.

“The study provides further evidence that COVID-19 is permanently altering U.S. consumer behavior. There are long term implications of the new consumer behaviors for industries like retail, transportation, and travel among others. These organizations need to quickly adapt their business models to serve the new consumer behaviors in order to survive and thrive,” said Jesus Mantas, Senior Managing Partner, IBM Services.

AMONG THE MORE NOTEWORTHY FINDINGS:

• **Personal mobility could be different after the pandemic.**

The survey results show consumer attitudes toward public transportation have shifted notably. More than 20 percent of respondents who regularly used buses, subways or trains now said they no longer would, and another 28 percent said they will likely use public transportation less often.

More than half of people surveyed who used ridesharing apps and services said they would either use these less or

stop using these services completely. Findings were not quite as dire for taxis and other traditional car services, as a smaller 24 percent of people surveyed indicated they will no longer use these modes of transportation.

• **More use of personal vehicles, but purchases are delayed.**

More than 17 percent of people surveyed said that they intend to use their personal vehicle more as a result of COVID-19, with approximately one in four saying they will use it as their exclusive mode of transportation going forward.

One-third of respondents said that constraints on their personal finances will “greatly” influence their decision to buy a vehicle once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. More than 25 percent said that a lack of confidence in the global and U.S. economic outlook will impact their decisions to buy a vehicle – with nearly the same number of people saying they would be holding off on buying for more than six months. Consumers added that manufacturer incentive programs are not likely to persuade or change their thinking.

• **Event attendance will be down for some time.**

When asked about attendance at various types of large events once stay-at-home restrictions are lifted, more than half of respondents said they are unwilling to be exposed to large crowds for the remainder of 2020. Conferences and trade shows had a strong response, with 75 percent indicating that they are unlikely to attend an in-person conference or trade show in 2020. Bars and restaurants are more likely to fare much better.

More than one-third of consumers indicated they will visit these establishments, with only about ten percent saying they will not. Outdoor parks also represent a favored destination; one-third of respondents said they are very likely to visit an outdoor park after restrictions are lifted. Approximately 25 percent of consumers also indicated they will be ready to visit the beach, and one in five will be ready to go shopping at malls and shopping centers.

THE RETAIL EXPERIENCE CONTINUES TO EVOLVE

Due to their concerns about COVID-19, nearly 40 percent of consumers surveyed said they are likely to use contactless payment options via their mobile device or credit card when shopping. More than 75 percent of

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respondents indicate they are choosing to visit stores to buy essential goods (i.e., food & beverages and household & cleaning products); however, responding consumers in the Northwest were more likely to buy essential goods online and ship to home or another destination than any other U.S. region.

The study also reveals that the pandemic has created a priority on shopping local for those surveyed – with 25 percent of respondents indicating they are now shopping more often at locally owned stores and buying more local made, grown or sourced products.

THE RISE OF THE REMOTE WORKFORCE

The forced shift to operating as a largely remote workforce has led to nearly 40 percent of respondents indicating they feel strongly that their employer should provide employee opt-in remote work options when returning to normal operations. And remote work appears to be growing on people, as more than 75 percent indicate they would like to continue to work remotely at least oc-

asionally, while more than half – 54 percent – would like this to be their primary way of working.

The shift toward a more remote workforce could require more than a simple change of location – it may require the use of soft skills to continue to be productive and successful. A 2019 study from the IBV revealed that adaptability, time management and ability to work well on teams as some of the most crucial to the workforce today – however, only 41 percent of CEOs surveyed felt they had the capability in terms of people skills and resources required to execute their business strategies. It will be imperative for organizations to prioritize reskilling employees around these core capabilities.

For further information on IBM's Institute for Business Value, please visit: <https://www.ibm.com/thought-leadership/institute-business-value/> **INK**

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IT'S COMMON

knowledge that every service and retail business has to stay on top of consumer trends. This applies

to our publishing businesses as we evaluate reader trends and how end point consumers interact with our advertisers. We marry these two factors together to create new product lines, better marketing messages, and improved distribution channels to connect buyer and seller.

AFCP is no different. Our consumers are large and small publishers from all corners of the country, vendors who supply needed services to our members, and free paper professionals diligently working to make this marriage of buyer and seller viable in their specific market.

During our ongoing evaluation of trends seen within these AFCP consumers, we began a process to evaluate the combining of services with the Independent Free Papers of America (IFPA). Trends, and actual survey data, showed us that our consumers desired some level of consolidation amongst the free paper industry's two national trade associations.

We learned from our members, vendors, and individuals that one association could provide immediate and long-lasting benefits. These consumers indicated a desire to not pick and choose between two organizations and expressed interest in participating in just one national ad network, paying just one annual dues fee, and budgeting for fewer, stron-

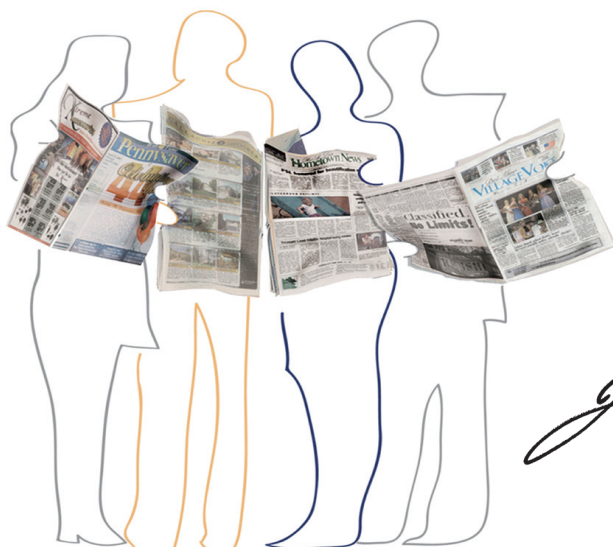
ger, conferences and events. The expressed desire was to eliminate duplication of efforts in order to sustain one solid association to represent the industry.

As our consumers' businesses continue to evolve, the trend toward tighter budgeting of dollars and time intensifies and the desire to support one strong national association remains.

Over the past number of months discussions of merger possibilities between AFCP and IFPA have gained momentum. Representatives from each organization have worked together to craft a framework of what we might become as one. At the fore of these discussions is taking the best of what both groups have to offer and packaging those into an organization that serves the best interest of our members, vendors, and other industry partners.

My publishing company looks very different today than it did just a year ago. I suspect yours does as well. AFCP & IFPA will also look different as time moves on. These evolutions are brought by consumer trends and our need to provide the best in services to meet these trends.

What exactly these entities will look like is yet to be fully determined, but rest assured we are driven by the needs of our consumers and our mission to help members enhance profitability and be a leader in strengthening the free publication industry. **INK**

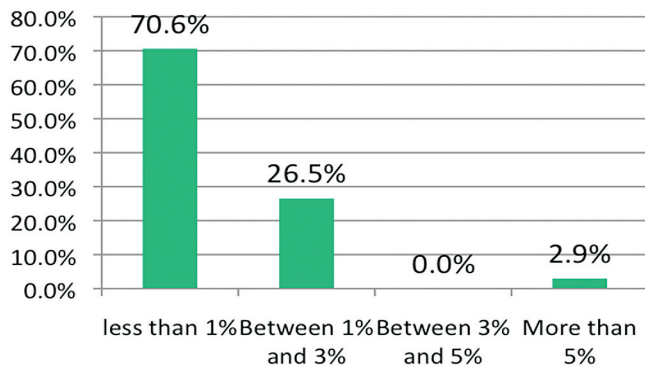


A handwritten signature of John Draper in black ink.

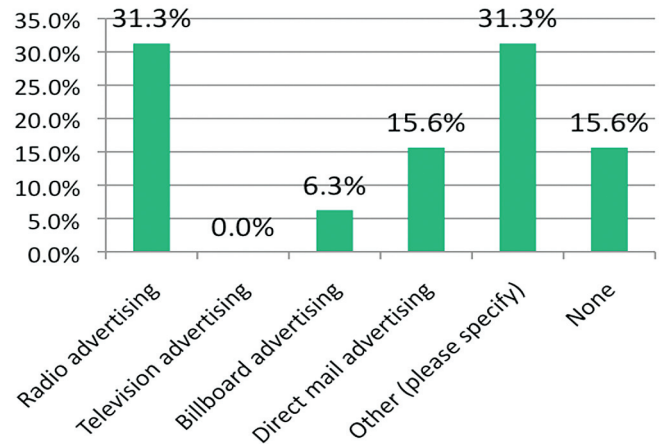
JOHN DRAPER
AFCP PRESIDENT
THE FREE STAR

The Survey SAYS...

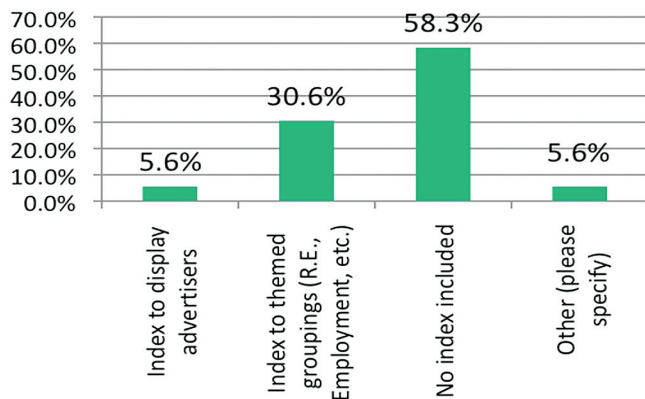
What percentage of your publishing revenue do you spend on advertising (NOT including in-paper advertising with your own publications).



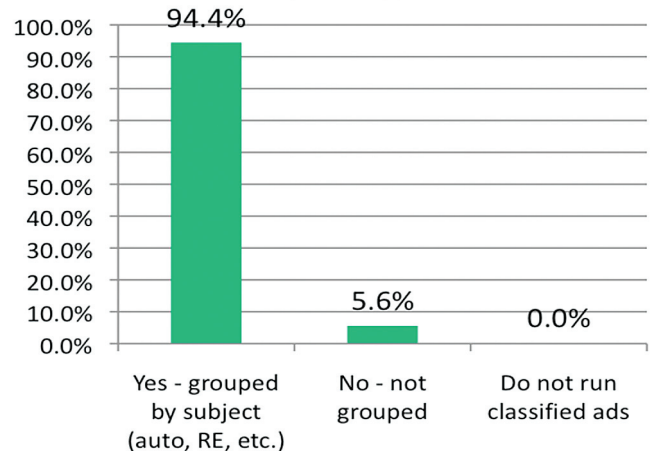
What type of external advertising do you utilize for you publications?



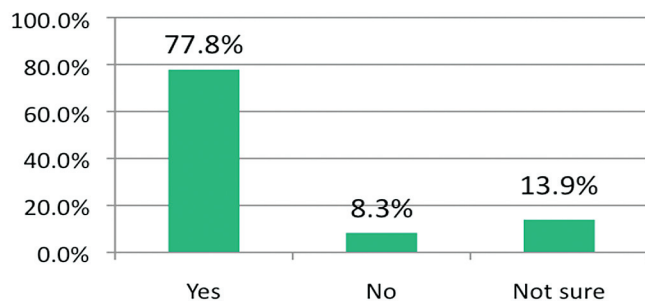
Do you include an index in your publication for any of the following?



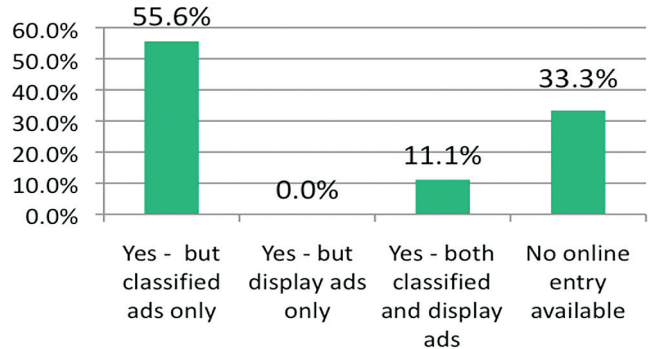
Do you group your classified ads by ad type?



Is your website responsive (responds & adapts to the type of device being viewed on)?

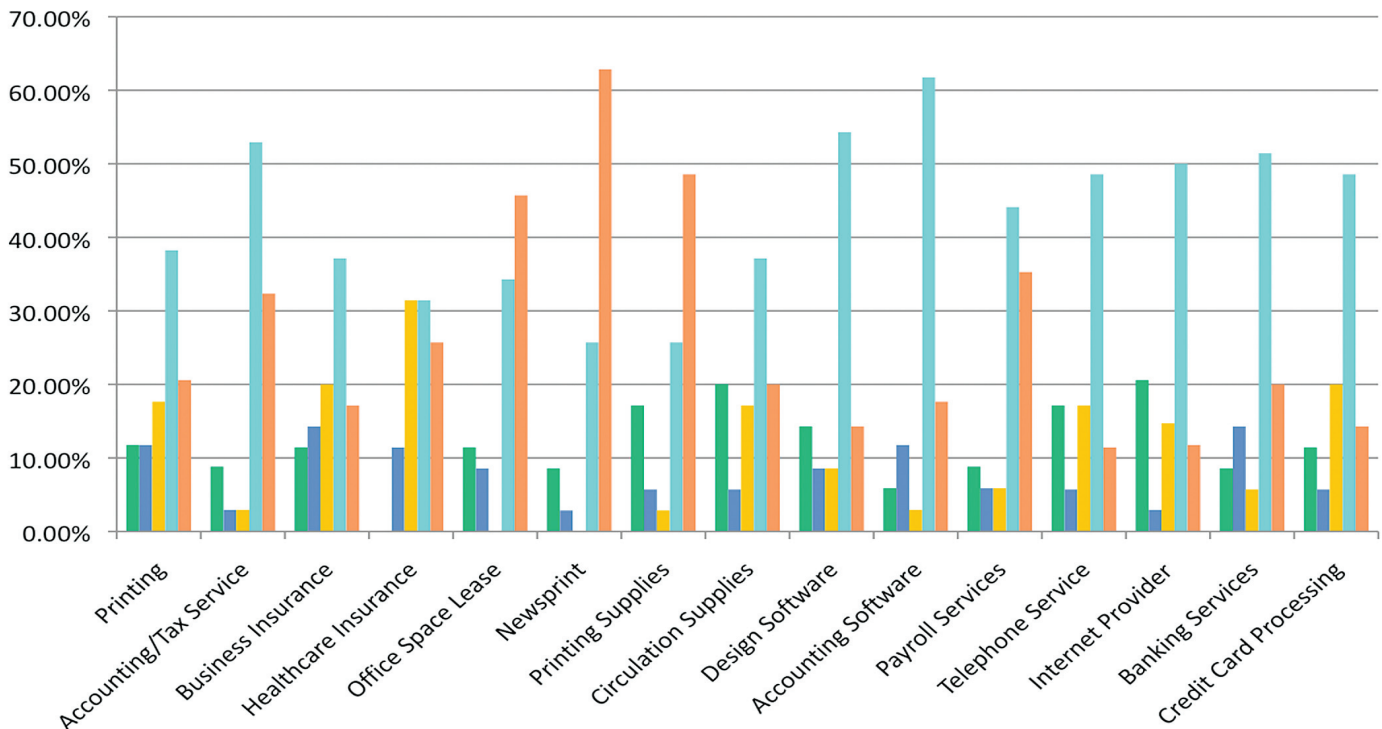


Do you offer advertisers the ability to enter their ads online?



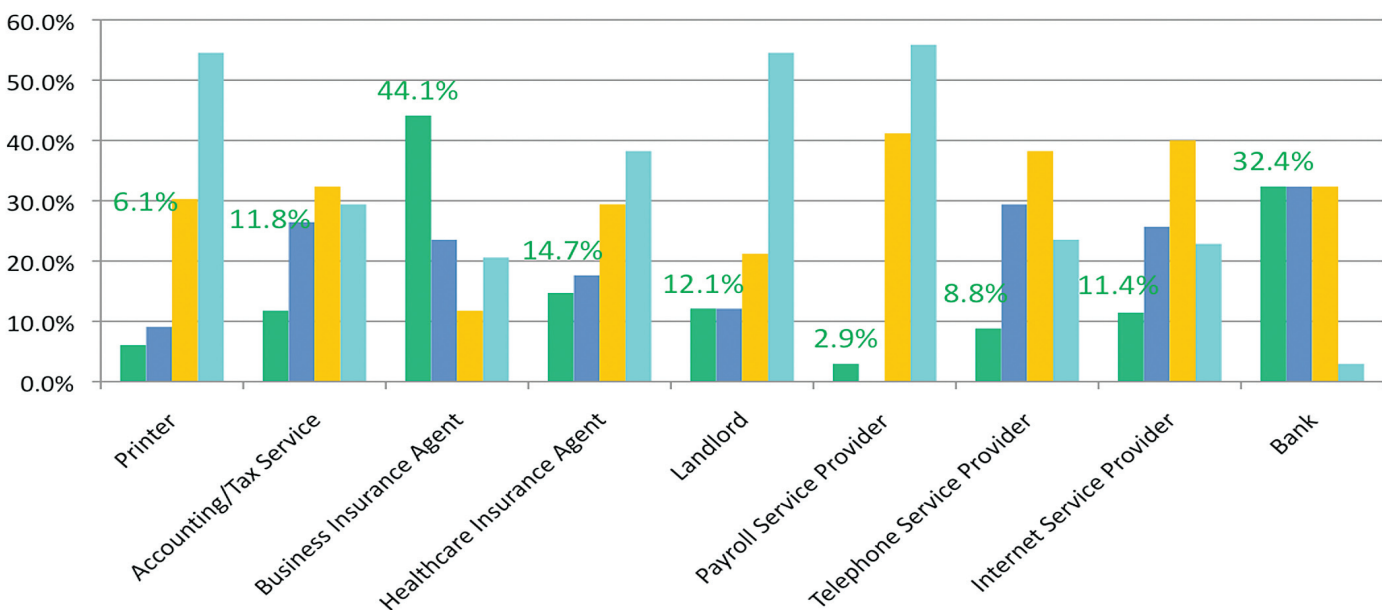
When is the last time you sought updated bids on the following?

■ Within last 3 months ■ 3 to 6 months ■ 6 to 12 months ■ Over a year ■ Not applicable



Which of the providers from above are advertisers in your publications?

■ Regular Advertiser ■ Occasional Advertiser ■ Rarely Advertises ■ Not applicable



Current Consumer TRENDS

CORONAVIRUS. PANDEMIC. COVID-19.

We are all so much more familiar with these words than any of us want to be, and our businesses have taken a devastating hit as a result. When America reopens for business, wouldn't you like to know what products and services are going to be on consumers' "Must-Have-Now!" shopping list?

Pulse Research knows, and President John Marling is offering to share Pulse Research's insight with readers of Free Paper INK.

The annual Pulse of America (POA) survey has captured the shopping and purchasing intentions of consumers for many years. Pulse had just finished its annual survey in January, right before the pandemic invalidated it as the country shut down and people were asked to stay home.

In early March, Pulse launched the complementary Pulse COVID Impact Shopping survey with the support of publishing corporations, press associations and hundreds of publications. The results were incredible. Over 30,000 samples have been collected from this ongoing survey. The shopping results have provided hope and opportunity for both publishers and local businesses.

Many readers of INK are familiar with purchase intention surveys done by Circulation Verification

Council as part of an audit, but there is a major difference. Since CVC's main purpose is the audit not the survey, it gives a general overview of very broad categories of planned purchases. The Pulse survey goes into much greater depth and breadth, spanning thousands of products, services and business

COVID survey delved into a category in depth. For example, respondents were asked if they planned to either get a new provider or change a current provider in the next three months in all of these medical and health categories: chiropractor, dentist, general practitioner, family practitioner, optometrist, pe-

diatrician, cardiologist, mental health provider, denture or implant specialist, ear/nose/throat doctor, home health care provider, internal medicine doctor, nutritionist or dietitian, physical therapist, psychiatrist, hearing aid center, laboratory or medical testing facility, medical marijuana dispensary, medical spa, mental health clinic, medical support store, pain clinic, rehabilitation clinic, sleep disorder clinic, urgent care clinic, walk-in clinic, or hospital.

Data is more important than ever before in this COVID era. Businesses are hurting after forced shutdowns. Having such a wealth of knowledge as to consumer purchasing intentions helps an ad rep with his or her core mission: to help local businesses. The

business owner wants – needs! – to know what their customers will be purchasing over the next 90 days, and they are excited to see this survey information.

"We have an obligation to help local businesses or they will close," said Marling. "We have to give them hope."

35. Which of the following types of RESTAURANTS do you or the members of your household plan to use in the NEXT 30 DAYS? (Check all that apply.)

Value	Percent	Responses
Fast Food Restaurant	46.4%	307
Family Style Restaurant	53.2%	352
Food Cart / Food Truck	5.0%	33
Fine Dining Restaurant	33.8%	224
Restaurant with Lounge or Bar	26.9%	178
Pizza Restaurant	53.8%	356
None of the above / Does not apply	19.3%	128

These sample questions from the current Pulse COVID Impact Shopping survey give you an in-depth look at consumers' planned restaurant purchases over the next 90 days. With this information, you can better serve your local advertisers.

37. What services do you plan to use from local restaurants over the NEXT 3 MONTHS? (Check all that apply.)

Value	Percent	Responses
Home delivery with fee	33.7%	223
Free delivery	47.9%	317
Drive-thru	49.1%	325
Carryout	60.9%	403
Curbside carryout	58.5%	387
Other	1.2%	8
None of the above / Does not apply	11.8%	78

types. Pulse then helps local publications share that information with local businesses.

The COVID survey focused on the most important categories to consumers stuck at home: home-based products and medical questions. In addition to basic demographic questions, each of the questions in the

The COVID survey research is available by state or region. Many states – such as Florida, California, Wisconsin and Georgia – have their own data. In other instances, such as in the Northeast, there were not enough individual state responses to the survey, but regional data is available. One thing that has become evident over the years is that except for regional differences (i.e. purchasing a snow blower vs. purchasing a swimming pool), there is not much difference in survey responses throughout the country.

With Pulse's Pulse Sales Tools, each rep has his own username. After logging into tools, they can first identify prospects. A list of over 500 business categories is ranked by the closing ratio, average sale, and sold rank. Pulse is unique in that every time a rep creates a sales proposal, it is recorded and tracked. The rep then goes back in and records the data after a sale is made, generating the ranked list of low-hanging fruit available in any market and visible to all sales reps.

With the Pulse Sales Tools tools, a rep can literally create a flyer to share with a business owner in 45 seconds right on the Pulse website. They simply pull up a map of their area. To the left is a list of businesses in the category they've chosen, with the business location on the map. They just click on the business name on the map, choose "flyer" from the options presented, and they instantly have a flyer (such as the one shown) to bring on a cold call. The beauty of the flyer is that it shows a business owner exactly how many households in your readership are planning to purchase what they have to sell in the next 90 days. A careful look shows the breakdown of the general category into smaller, more specific categories, along with the percentage of people planning to

buy and a breakdown of how many households that equates to in your readership area.

Additional tools include printing a quick teaser wrap to go around the sales package, as well as suggested wording for either a phone or email

contact; and, if the rep has access to Metro Creative Graphics' Ad Wizard, a spec ad is just a few clicks away.

A final tool worth mentioning is the Closing tool, which is designed
Continued on page 18

EDWARD JONES - FINANCIAL ADVISOR: THOMAS R WALLER, AAMS®

TO HELP YOUR BUSINESS PLAN DURING UNCERTAIN TIMES

Pulse Research asked the questions you would ask.

Do you Plan to get (new or change) Financial Advisors over the next 3 months?

1,723

Said Yes

Out of the 15,250 households reached by
Leader-Gazette each week

11.3% plan to get (new or change) Financial Advisors over the next 3 months

Let's Find Some New Opportunities in this Unprecedented Time

We asked about specific buying plans over the next 90 days to give you some ideas

Pulse asked about these categories	results	opportunity	
Mutual Funds	12.3%	1,876 households	○
Common or Preferred Stock	9.7%	1,479 households	○
Manage Investments (new or change)	20%	3,050 households	○
Financial Services (new or change)	11.4%	1,739 households	○
401(k)	16.6%	2,532 households	○
Gold or Precious Metals	1.5%	229 households	○
Money Market Funds	9.1%	1,388 households	○
Manage Retirement Accounts (new or change)	20.7%	3,157 households	○
Annuities	3%	458 households	○

Would you like to know more?

I would be happy to share more of the (new or change) Financial Advisor research results and ideas with Edward Jones – Financial Advisor: Thomas R Waller, AAMS®.

Let's get together to review opportunities and ideas for your business during this time of challenge.

This personalized flyer, imprinted with the sales rep's name, email address and publication, can be generated in less than a minute with information pertinent to the business the rep plans to visit.

Continued from page 17

to show a potential advertiser the break-even point. By inputting the campaign cost and some additional data, the tool calculates the fewest number of customers needed for that advertiser to break even. Since the tools are also available on mobile devices, they are readily accessible to reps in the field.

"Information in today's world is a game changer," said Marling. "The industry currently sells on product and price, but that won't cut it any more. We have to find the opportunity that benefits the advertiser. Start every conversation with the value of the survey for them. Give them an opportunity to make money. Then you show them the package with the solution to their problem to reach that audience. We have to stop selling single ads and start selling campaigns."


If a publisher employs sales managers, the program allows management to set and manage key performance indicators. Ad reps can see all the presentations they have created, and they can input the particulars as to the date sold, what type of sale it was, the amount sold and the presentation date. The program gives the rep credit for the sale and awards points that can be used for contest purposes.

There's always turnover in sales, so Pulse has made sales training and certification available. The free training tool teaches a new rep how to get prospects, engage with businesses, get appointments, do a needs analysis, create spec ads, overcome objections and more.

Readers of Free Paper INK can receive the current COVID shopping survey results for free for their state or region. By promoting the current survey via house ads, Facebook posts, etc., a publisher can get their publication's specific audience survey for free once they have 400 sample responses.

Pulse is also offering INK readers complimentary 30-day access to the Pulse Sales Tools program and use of all the tools described in this article.

"Our mission is to really transform the industry by knowing the value of your audience," said Marling. "The audience is the tip of the spear. That's why we're giving away the tools for 30 days. The industry has been good to Pulse, and I want to give back."

To get a copy of the Pulse COVID Impact Shopping research for your area and complimentary access to the Pulse Sales Tools for 30 days, go to pulseresearch.com/ support or email John Marling at marling@pulseresearch.com. 

Top 10 "Most Sold" Ranking in April COVID Survey

<u>Category</u>	<u>Business Type</u>	<u>Close Ratio</u>	<u>Rank</u>
Real Estate (new or change)	Realtor	46.7%	1
Automotive	New Vehicle Dealership	47.7%	2
Restaurant / Bar / Lounge	Family Style Restaurant	36.2%	3
Home & Garden	Furniture Store	45.1%	4
Automobile	Auto Repair Shop	39.1%	5
Restaurant / Bar / Lounge	Restaurant With Lounge or Bar	35.7%	6
Restaurant / Bar / Lounge	Fast Food Restaurant	38.8%	7
Financial Services (new or change)	Financial Advisor	38.8%	8
Professional Services (new or change)	Insurance Agency	36.2%	9
Health & Medical (new or change)	Dentist	39.3%	10

TownNews takes on “news deserts” with NEWS NIRVANA program

NEWS NIRVANA EQUIPS QUALIFYING LOCAL NEWS start-ups with best-of-breed digital services to grow audience and revenue.

Even before COVID-19 ravaged the world economy, local media organizations—especially newspapers—faced daunting challenges. According to the University of North Carolina’s The Expanding News Desert report, between 1,300 and 1,400 communities have lost their newspapers since 2004, leaving them with no local coverage. Circulation declines, stagnating ad growth, and media consolidation have created “news deserts,” whose citizens have little access to the information and oversight that’s critical to a functioning democracy.

News Nirvana, a new service from TownNews, identifies news deserts, partners with capable local publishers and editors, and provides them with the tools, resources, and consulting to make their new digital news initiatives successful. Qualifying news start-ups will be equipped with a mobile-friendly website that includes robust editorial tools, subscription/membership support, detailed site analytics, and more. Participating sites will have the ability to distribute their content on the TownNews Content Exchange, a network of more than 600 participating new publishers nationwide.

“News Nirvana is an incubator for digital news start-ups,” said Rick Rogers, Chief Revenue Officer at TownNews. “We’re giving qualifying publishers access to a ‘light’ edition of the industry-leading platform that’s used by more than 2,000 news organizations nationwide. They can get started without worrying about the technology—that part is covered.

“Once they’re off the ground, they can seamlessly graduate to the full TownNews platform, and gain total access to the most powerful revenue, audience, and efficiency tools in the business.”

Each site will be hosted on its own subdomain on

the News Nirvana network (example: Link2LeesSummit.NewsNirvana.com). The News Nirvana portal site (www.NewsNirvana.com) will feature quality journalism sourced from participating sites and the TownNews Content Exchange Network.

“One of the most difficult challenges for digital news operations is managing and optimizing the myriad of available technology. Coupled with knowledge needed for ad operations, subscription programs, and paywalls, it can be very daunting for a small news company. We’re taking all of that on, so that they can focus on providing local news coverage and local merchant promotion,” Rogers said.



All News Nirvana sites feature layouts that are optimized to drive revenue from programmatic and local advertising sales. Programmatic advertising is managed by TownNews Ad Ops, the same team that’s responsible for generating millions of dollars in advertising across the TownNews client network.

“It’s a revenue share model based on locally sold advertising and what TownNews can yield through our

programmatic efforts. By lowering the entry costs and providing advertising support, a News Nirvana site can become revenue-positive much more quickly,” Rogers said.

The first site to launch on the new platform will be Link 2 Lee’s Summit, an online-native news site covering Lee’s Summit, Missouri.

“I am excited for this opportunity to utilize the News Nirvana system to enhance our coverage of the Lee’s Summit community. TownNews has a long history of developing quality digital tools with proven results in audience building, storytelling, and revenue generation,” said Nick Parker, the founder of Link 2 Lee’s Summit. “We’re a relatively new community news organization and these

Continued on page 20

Continued from page 19

tools will push us into the next evolution of our service to the community.”

According to Parker, a healthy local media ecosystem is critical, especially in today’s contentious political atmosphere. In the 1990s, Parker worked as a sports editor, news designer and managing editor for the local newspaper in Lee’s Summit. Years later the newspaper sold and moved away from local ownership, and Parker moved to a career in the real estate marketing sector. But journalism was always in his blood, so Parker returned to his roots and started Link 2 Lee’s Summit in 2016 — with a goal of telling the stories that need to be told in the community he calls home.

The News Nirvana program will allow Parker to expand Link 2 Lee’s Summit with a dynamic website to showcase his news coverage along with his community-focused podcast content.

“In today’s economic and political climates, the importance of a strong community news service is more

necessary than ever,” Parker said. “There is a real and present need for watch dogs, trained reporters and news personnel a community can both trust and relate to. Thriving communities demand access to all of those things, and more. The News Nirvana platform puts the tools necessary to provide this service within reach of the small community media services who are stepping up to fill the ever-increasing local news gap. These are tools I wouldn’t typically have affordable access to. This partnership will significantly push the evolution of our community news service and our ability to tell the stories of Lee’s Summit, Missouri.”

“News Nirvana is the perfect solution for digital start-ups in news deserts or publications in underserved media markets that are at risk,” Rogers said. “If you have the desire and drive to give your community the news and information they desperately need, we can help.

“If you’re a journalist or publisher located in a community without reliable local coverage, News Nirvana is a great way to launch a new digital news site. To get started, visit www.NewsNirvana.com/Apply.” **INK**

Cut Out The Fat and Look Better!

In this challenging time for print media you need to run lean and mean. This is no time to be weighted down by bloated costs and unwanted fat in your operating expenses.

Switch your layout, design, production and art direction to **Design2Pro** and you’ll save **anywhere from 50 to 75% off** the cost of making your pages, producing your print and web ads and even running your website. Subcontracting is the wave of the future. Cut out frustrating, wasteful and expensive in-house design and pre-press costs and you’ll free-up capital to invest in better editorial content or putting more boots on the ground to sell more ads.

We can make your pages, ads and overall design sparkle, snap, crackle and pop. Complete redesign services at no extra cost. Better looking publications and more attractive ads are a must in this highly competitive environment. Better looking periodicals attract more readers and better looking ads get more response which makes for happier advertisers who spend more money with you. Email or call us and see how we can trim your fat and make you a lot better looking and more profitable in the process.

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**We Make Publishing
More Profitable.**

Howard Barbanel, Executive V.P.

516-860-7440

Howard@Design2Pro.com

Visit us as Design2Pro.com



The LEADERSHIP Institute

by Jim Busch

The Leadership Institute is a structured sales and sales management training program sponsored by the Association of Free Community Publications.



To date, 2,265 free paper professionals have attended classes at the AFCP, state and regional conferences, earning over 13,841 class credits in 87 different course curriculums. A total of 124 people have completed all the requirements and been certified as Associate Advertising Executives (AAE) by the AFCP Board!

"Our workaday lives are filled with opportunities to bless others. The power of a single glance or an encouraging smile must never be underestimated."

– G. Richard Rieger

I DON'T THINK ANYONE CAN DENY THAT WE ARE GOING through some tough times. This pandemic just won't go away and it continues to batter the economy, hurting our papers and our customers' businesses. A lot of very smart people are working on developing a vaccine, but the best case scenario is that a cure for this disease is at least six months away. No one can say for sure when things will begin to turn round, but we do know it's going to be a while.

If we've learned anything from the past, it is that getting through tough times requires lots of hard work and plenty of resilience. Like the old Timex ads used to say, we have to "Take a licking and keep on ticking!"

The good news is that we're not alone in our struggle. We're in the same boat with our bosses, our co-workers and our customers. In times like these, it is imperative that we help each other get through this mess.

With optimism in short supply, we need to manage this precious resource. First we have to constantly refresh our own personal supply of positive thoughts. We must practice good mental hygiene, keeping negative thoughts at bay and staying focused on the positives in our lives. This requires considerable effort, with so much doom and gloom in the news, but it is both possible and necessary.

Once we have our own attitude in order, we must try to help those around us. Fortunately, a good attitude is as contagious as COVID-19. If we remain upbeat and enthusiastic, it will rub off on everyone around us. Our very presence will help others feel better about themselves.

As G. Richard Rieger says above, we must "bless" others with our smiles and with words of encouragement. If someone is down, remind them that things will get better. If someone is complaining, try to show them the bright side of the situation. The old saying, "we can't afford the luxury of a negative thought," is truer today than at any other time in history.

We owe it to ourselves and everyone around us to be a beacon of positive energy throughout this crisis. When it comes to attitude, testing positive is a good thing! **INK**



How Branding can help ADVERTISING

by Bob Berting



A BRAND IS intangible. It's how a business feels about their product—how a product is perceived, particularly by the consumers. These consumers must see a multi-dimensional business that owns the news market, owns the information market, and owns the

advertising market. This business must realize that branding is a quantifiable, longterm, strategic marketing process of building and overseeing perceived value.

4 WAYS TO BUILD A BRAND

1. Evaluation—decide on the position of your brand in the marketplace.
2. Get management involved to facilitate a strategic plan.
3. Create an integrated marketing plan that ties in all strategies, marketing vehicles, and objectives into a long-range program.
4. Check on the campaign's progress after it has been underway for a reasonable length of time.

A HARD LOOK AT CHANGING NEEDS & BEHAVIORS

The vision by management is to build the community. This means the branding model must be for the long term—to see the big picture—to see the total forest, not just the trees. This also means we must move our thinking from being totally dependent on special promotions, particularly from one-time promotions, to thinking that is real marketing.

This means a much greater emphasis on the customers—where the customers become totally primary—and all products and services are adapted to fit the changing needs and behaviors of these primary customers. It's easy to forget the changing

needs and behaviors of customers, and that's the reason why many businesses lose out to competition.

FUTURE OF BRANDING

Branding pre-sells the product or service. The endorsement of the business is represented by the branding process, not always by the personal recommendation of a salesperson. If your business is branded properly, it will be at the heart of the community and be a great help to the sales force. Actually the salespeople must be like an evangelism or missionary team, constantly getting more involved in community building activities—which will further the branding process.

These things aren't just P.R. and they're not charity—it's real life service that needs to be done regularly by a business that understands the importance of branding.

BRANDING SUMMARY

Businesses aren't just about product sales or marketing or maintaining new equipment. These are only the ingredients of a basic foundation platform. Branding brings out agenda-setting leadership and vibrant community involvement. **INK**

Bob is the author of four best-selling e-books for the newspaper industry: "Dynamic Sales and Image Power", "Advanced Selling Skills For The Advertising Sales Pro", "Power Selling Tools For The Advertising Sales Consultant", and his newest e-book, "Smart Customer Connections For Advertising Salespeople. 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.

Selfish isn't Selfish

by Samantha Anderson, Rising Star

I WOULD ABSOLUTELY DESCRIBE MYSELF AS AN extroverted introvert. Meaning I'm an introvert at heart but my outgoing personality can sometimes be perceived as being more social than I really am.

Many would be surprised to know that I'm happiest at home or in a small social setting as larger groups give me crippling anxiety. Or that my ideal weekend would be sleeping in and just doing whatever I want by myself with no obligations. During the "Stay Home, Stay Safe" order in Washington state, I found my best self and started living my best life.

The seven weeks I spent at home were extremely therapeutic. There was no happy hour, no family BBQs, no place to rush to after work. There was nothing to do except look inward, take time for self reflection and focus on me. I realized very quickly that I had been putting myself on the back burner for a long time and I had been making excuses each time I did that. I decided that I was not going to be okay with that anymore.

It's hard but realizing that being selfish and being

selfless are very different and are not at all connected to each other. It is okay to put an important work project first; but when it's done, that shouldn't stay your primary focus. You have to adjust your focus to what needs your attention most. Sometimes it's work, sometimes it's a friend or family member in need, and sometimes that focus is you – and that is

okay and not at all selfish.

As I write this I am living my most selfish existence to date and I am 110% okay with that. Taking a day off to spend with yourself or skipping the gym to go for a walk in the woods are all okay things to do. I will no longer apologize for taking time for myself to get in the right mindset. I will be honest when I need space for me and want to back out of a social commitment. But most of all, I will not let myself feel weak or conceited for taking time for me.

I encourage you all to permanently put aside time for yourself each day. Use permanent marker and write it in your planner right now. What will you miss out on? Just time with yourself, the longer you wait. **INK**

"Being selfish and being selfless are very different. I encourage you all to permanently put aside time for yourself each day."

Somebody once said...

"When tempted to fight fire with fire, remember that the Fire Department usually uses water."

Unknown

A New Day Dawns - Save The Date!

AFCP & MFCP Are Pleased To Present

Growing IN THE HEARTLAND
afcp MFCP

Joint Conference and Trade Show - April 22-23, 2021 in Des Moines

GRAPEVINE

WHAT'S GOING ON...

THE INDIANA GAZETTE, Indiana, Pennsylvania, has been acquired by Sample News Group according to Randy Cope of Cribb, Greene & Cope, who represented the Donnelly family in the sale. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

Sample News Group, based in Corry, Erie County, Pennsylvania, whose CEO is George "Scoop" Sample, owns more than 75 publications in Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Vermont, Maine and New Hampshire.

"Our family newspaper has had the privilege of being invited into homes throughout Indiana County for the last 130 years," said Mike Donnelly. "Over those years, we kept our readers informed of what was going on in our communities. Through the great efforts of our employees we had over these many years, we never missed a day of delivering the news and advertising that our readers enjoyed. I am going to miss being a part of that process.

"I am really proud about how The Indiana Gazette and our employees gave back to the communities that we served during our time as publishers, through programs such as Angel Wings, Share & Care Day, It's a Wonderful Night Light Up Night, St. Patty's Day Open, the annual cooking show to benefit ICCAP," he said. "Also, we made it a point to promote

the fundraising and good works of the United Way, the service clubs and fundraisers for people who were sick or dealing with other tragedies. We were there for those in need.

"However, we have reached a time when being a single-point, family-owned, independent newspaper was not a viable option moving forward."

The sale of the Gazette does not affect operations at Gazette Printers on Indian Springs Road in White Township, which will continue under the ownership of Indiana Printing & Publishing.

"George 'Scoop' Sample comes from another Pennsylvania newspaper family. I have known Scoop for years," Donnelly said, "and he understands the importance of what good the newspaper can do for the communities that they serve. The Indiana Gazette will be in good hands.

"I am proud to say that the Gazette has been named Newspaper of the Year three times in last several years, which is a testament to our employees' commitment to bring quality journalism to our readers."

Sample said he is excited about acquiring the Gazette. "Sample News Group is thrilled and honored to be selected to carry on the storied Donnelly legacy at The Indiana Gazette," said Sample. "We have known

the Donnellys since the early 1970s and, while often competitors, Joe and Lucy, and now Mike, never hesitated to work together.

"While the world and the newspaper industry face a challenging period, we are confident that Indiana County is a great area and The Indiana Gazette is a great newspaper."

Sample News Group newspapers in Pennsylvania include The Bedford Gazette, Bedford; The Daily News, Huntingdon; The Gettysburg Times, Gettysburg; The News Item, Shamokin; The Review, Towanda; The Latrobe Bulletin, Latrobe; Morning Times, Sayre; Corry Journal, Corry; Standard Journal, Milton; The Daily Herald, Tyrone; and The Leader Times, Kittanning.

The roots of the Gazette can be traced to 1890, but it was a century ago, in 1911, that R. Nelson Ray, a successful businessman and former teacher in Indiana County and the Midwest, purchased the Indiana Printing & Publishing Company after his eldest son, R. Hastie Ray, asked his father to buy a newspaper for him.

Randy Cope of Cribb, Greene & Cope represented the Donnelly family in their sale to Sample News Group. Cribb, Greene & Cope is a leading merger and acquisition firm with offices in Arkansas, Montana, and California. **INK**

Associations IN the NEWS

THE NORTH AMERICAN MATURE PUBLISHERS Association (NAMPA) National Convention will be hosted via Zoom on October 6-7, 2020.

Once the agenda has been finalized, members will receive an email invitation to join in one or all eight sessions. There is no fee to attend and each session will be recorded to allow members to view at their convenience.

Participants will have the opportunity to win prizes. One participant at each of the eight sessions will be randomly selected to win a \$25 gift card. A Grand Prize of one free registration to attend the 2021 NAMPA convention in San Diego October 10-12, 2021, including free lodging, will be awarded to the participant who attends the most sessions. In the event of a tie, the winner will be selected via a drawing.

Contact Gary Calligas at gary@maturepublishers.com or call 877-466-2672 for additional information.

THE MID-ATLANTIC Community Papers Association (MACPA) has announced the speakers for its March 19-20, 2021 "Beyond Survival: Don't Look Back, Look Ahead" conference in Carlisle, Pa.

Elaine Buckley, President of Ocean Media / My Living Magazines in Florida and a 40-year veteran in Sales Management, will share her expertise in sales training, recruiting and leadership. Preston Gibson, CEO of the Cape May

County Herald and a former Coast Guard officer, will facilitate a discussion highlighting opportunities and help overcoming obstacles, charting a course toward smoother sailing.

Early bird registration is now open. Register online at <https://bit.ly/MACPA2021>, and reserve your room at the Comfort Suites Downtown Carlisle (Pennsylvania) at <https://bit.ly/3gbBqaT>.

Contact Alyse Mitten at info@macpa.net for additional information.

THE INDEPENDENT FREE PAPERS of America (IFPA) "Denver 2020 Vision Event" on September 11-12, 2020, will be either an in-person or virtual gathering – it's your choice.

On Friday's agenda are sessions on How to Dell in a Virtual Environment by Ryan Dohrn, the Top 10 Things to Know About Zoom Meetings, Podcasting: How To

and Why, Creative Services, and Managing Your Staff Remotely. Saturday's all-day session by Will Thomas will cover all things digital.

If you want to attend in person, the \$349 per person cost includes meals. The Woolley's Luxury Suites room price has dropped from \$169 to \$149/night. Register at www.ifpa.com/events, reserve your hotel room and make your

travel plans.

If you prefer to attend virtually, the cost is \$100 for your entire company. That includes as many people as you want to attend via Zoom, and all sessions. Call Douglas Fry at 931-922-4171 to set up your credentials. Each session will be recorded, so that same \$100 covers viewing the sessions at a later date.

THE FLORIDA MEDIA ASSOCIATION (FMA) is hosting an open and free seminar series of weekly Zoom meetings on Wednesdays at 4:00 p.m. for advertising sales professionals located in Florida.

If you are an advertising sales professional in Florida and you sell direct mail, newspaper, magazine, TV, commercial print, radio, digital or specialty advertising products, you are invited to participate. If you aren't currently a member of the association, contact Barbara Holmes at FMAclassifieds@aol.com to be added to the invitation list.

THE MIDWEST FREE COMMUNITY PAPERS (MFCP) has announced a change within the organization, saying goodbye to Executive Director Kelly Coy and welcoming incoming Executive Director Lee Borkowski.

Borkowski has an extensive background in the free paper industry, having worked for independent, publicly-owned and employee-owned companies since 1981.

Submit your "associations in the news" story to FreePaperINK@aol.com.



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SEPTEMBER 11-12, 2020 :
DENVER, CO

Independent Free Papers of America (IFPA). Leadership Summit, Woolley's Suites, Aurora, Colorado. For information contact Douglas Fry at 931-922-4171 or email: douglas@ifpa.com.

| oct.

OCTOBER 11-14, 2020:
SAN DIEGO, CA

North American Mature Publishers Association (NAMPA). National Convention, Sheraton San Diego Hotel and Marina, San Diego, California. For information contact Gary Calligas at 877-466-2672 or email: nampa.gary@gmail.com.

| 2021

MARCH 19-20, 2021 :
CARLISLE, PA

Mid-Atlantic Community Papers Association (MACPA). Annual Conference, Comfort Suites Downtown, Carlisle, Pa. For information contact Alyse Mitten at 800-450-7227 or email: info@macpa.net.

APRIL 22-23, 2021 :
DES MOINES, IA

Association of Free Community Publications (AFCP) and Midwest Free Community Papers (MFCP). Joint Annual Conference and Trade Show, Des Moines, Iowa. For information contact Loren Colburn at 877-203-2327 or email: lo- ren@afcp.org; or Lee Borkowski at 507-388-6584 or email: director@mfcp.org.

To list your conference information in *Free Paper INK*, send it to:

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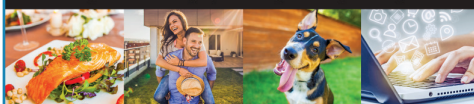
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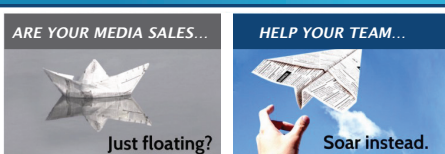
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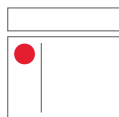
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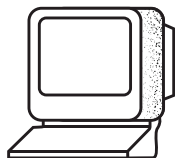
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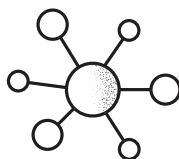
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