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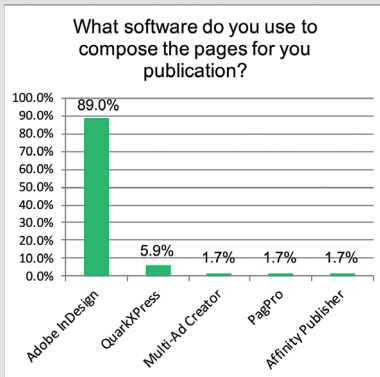


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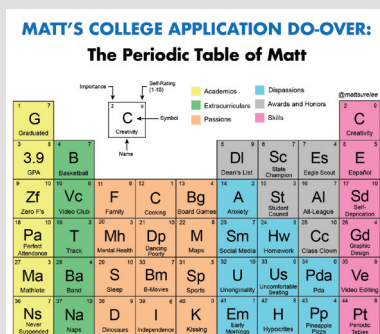
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COMING next month

The December issue of INK will include information on the Annual Conference and Trade Show that will be held in conjunction with MFCP in Des Moines in April. As always, it will also include a healthy dose of industry news, information and insights.

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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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when creating them.**



Albert Einstein

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Thursday - Live Publisher Discussions!



Bring a question - Find an answer!

What actual participants are saying...

"I can't tell you how important the Thursday calls have been for me these past 6 months. As a small operation, I've relied on my friends from across the country for ideas and strategies since joining AFCP in 2000. In good times, those relationships have helped us to innovate, optimize and grow, in tough times they've been my support network. I'm the glue for my business, right? Everyone expects me to have the answers, to lead with enthusiasm, to have a vision for what it is we're doing and where we're going. But who's my glue? Who keeps me going? Who motivates me with inspiration and aspiration? For me, it's been these calls. They give me ideas, hope and strategies in a time when I really needed it...still do!" - Florida Publisher

Visual Presentation Affects Perception

I HAVE ALWAYS HAD A KEEN interest in graphic design and how the visual presentation of something impacts how it is received. Even long ago as an ad sales representative, I would search through the Metro, Ad-Builder and Clipper art services for just the right graphic element for each ad I was submitting.

I could have found a more fun way to spend my Thursday evenings after the order deadline, but there were five or six of us who formed a bond in taking the graphic elements of our ad copy very seriously. Many evenings we would be there until 10 or 11 PM making sure each ad was making the best use of the space ordered. Not surprisingly, this was also the group that regularly exceeded their sales quota and built a strong base of consistent advertising clients.

Over the years, I have seen how the visual presentation of a variety of items has affected the perception of that item. Websites, company logos, advertising of all types, clothing, and publications all have an opportunity to make a good initial impression with that first glance or to reinforce a previously established impression.

A study from Carleton University in Ottawa looked at the ability of internet users to decide if they liked the look of a website with an exposure of just 1/20th of a second. They then repeated the exercise with longer exposure periods but found no substan-



LOREN COLBURN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

tial change in the participants ratings with longer exposure. This reinforces that our first impression is made almost instantly and based only on the graphic appearance.

There are so many graphic elements that play into that visual impression. The color selection, font choices, illustrations, amount of information and so many other elements all interrelate to form that critical perception. This first impression can convey a wide range of sensations including trustworthiness, professionalism and reliability. First impressions can also create a sense of familiarity, emotion, excitement and so much more. All through the visual presentation of the graphic design elements and all in the blink of an eye!

So where am I going with this?

What is the first impression made by your publication's cover, website, banner, media kit, business card, office entry? It is difficult to think all the way back to your first impression if enough time and exposures go by. Take each of these things and find out what people who don't deal with them every day think of them. Test what first impression they make utilizing a quick exposure to those who are unfamiliar. Once you know the perceptions they create, you can then determine if they align with what would be the desired impression.

Determining the ideal first impression you want to create for your company, product or communication should precede the design or development of anything. It should guide the design elements and overall visual presentation in order to maximize the effectiveness of the message or product. Continuing to monitor the alignment of the objective and the reality of your design efforts will allow you to optimize opportunities for success.

I am including several automotive ads with this column to illustrate how that industry builds on their desired perceptions utilizing clever design. Each aligns with an audience perception developed for their product while addressing a consistent consumer motivation for buying their product.

Until next month, tell all those media buyers, "If it's FREE, buy it!" **INK**

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The Aptly Named Family Flyer

THE FAMILY FLYER (CROWN POINT, INDIANA)

Publisher Shari Foreman joined the Association of Free Community Publications (AFCP) because she loved Free Paper INK magazine!

"Shortly after starting The Family Flyer in 2000, I joined the Midwest Free Community Papers (MFCP) and started receiving their newsletter and AFCP's Free Paper INK," said Foreman. "I loved the magazine so I joined AFCP. I've read every issue from cover to cover since."

Foreman started working in the industry when she was just a shy 17-year-old high school student. Her father knew a publisher named Bill Gibbon who was looking for a sales rep and she applied for the job. She worked for him for several years, learning the ropes and overcoming her shyness, before moving to Austin, Texas. While in Texas she worked at a printing company for several years. When she returned to her Indiana hometown in 1989, she worked for Gibbon again until he sold the paper in 1999.

"It was sold to a daily, and I didn't want to work for them. So I decided to start my own paper," she said.

Coming up with a name for the new paper wasn't difficult. Shari (#10) had decided to print the publication on 8-1/2" x 11" paper so her sister Paula (#6) suggested calling it the Flyer because of its size. As one of 15 – yes, 15! – children, family is important to Shari and so the addition of the word "Family" to the paper's name was an easy decision. Hence, The Family Flyer was born in Shari's bedroom in January of 2000, with the 35,000-circulation first issue hitting the streets in February.

The family often referred to each other in their birth order number, so when Shari (#10) launched the paper her father suggested that they include their birth order numbers on their business cards – which they've done consistently for the 20 years the paper has been published.

Debbie (#9) designed the publication's logo,

modeled after a Radio Flyer wagon. The 20th Anniversary Celebration logo adds stick figures of all 15 siblings – 12 girls and 3 boys – in their birth order beneath the iconic wagon.

Not all of Shari's (#10) siblings work in The Family Flyer, but a good number of them do. Jackie (#12) assists Debbie (#9) with the graphics, while Renee (#4), Marsha (#5) and Ginny (#14) all work in sales. Tina (#7) moved to South Florida about 10 years ago but still handles email and phone calls from the sunny South. She goes back to Indiana several times a year, mostly for family gatherings, and checks in with her advertising customers. Phyllis (#11) works from her home in Tiffin, Ohio, providing the company's wrap printing as well as regular "Gardening Tips" and "Here's What's Cookin'" articles.

The Family Flyer is a 49,000 circulation, direct-mailed monthly magazine serving South Lake County in Indiana. A digital edition serves nearby Porter County. Although the service area is only an hour south of Chicago and a half hour south of Gary, Indiana, it is a small rural community.

Delivered on the first Thursday of each month, The Family Flyer is comprised of 80% advertising and 20% editorial content. Readers look forward to several special annually-occurring mid-month editions as well: the Family Business Photo Album (February), Spring Into Action (April), Festival Flyer (June), Lifestyles (August), Business Card Directory (October) and Holiday Traditions (November). A new medical directory, the Fit & Healthy Family Guide, was just introduced in response to COVID.

Despite the recent economic and COVID challenges, Shari Foreman remains optimistic that business will bounce back. She said, "Hang in there! It's going to get better. Just keep your nose to the grindstone. The more calls you make, the more sales you're going to get. It's still a numbers game." **INK**



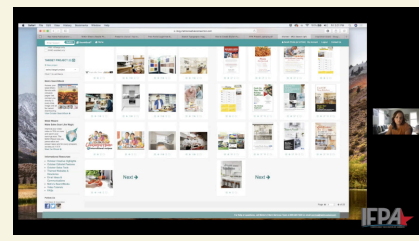
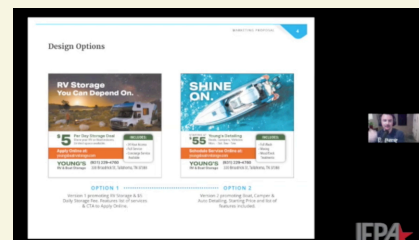
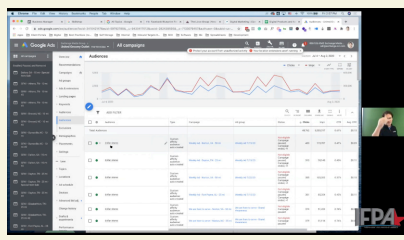
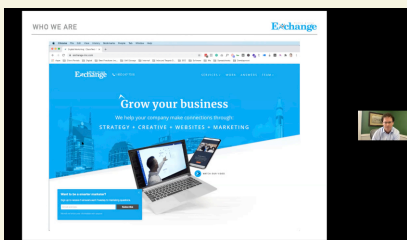
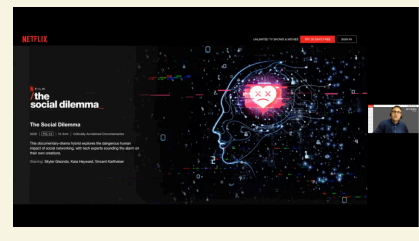
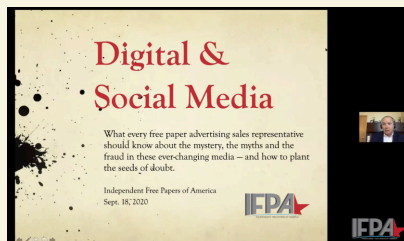
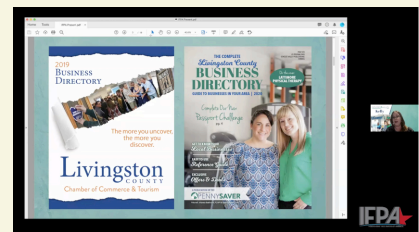
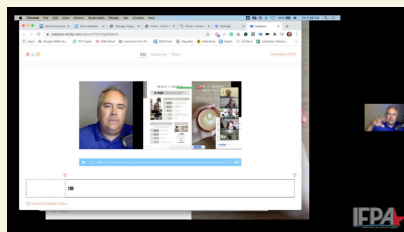
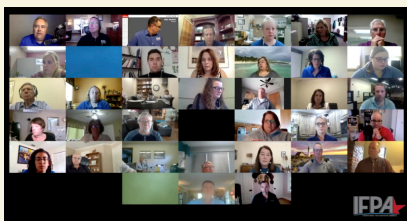
"The girls" (as Shari #10 calls them) pose for a rare group photo. From left to right are Paula (#6), Marsha (#5), Ginny (#14), Tina (#7), Shari (#10), Jackie (#12), Debbie (#9), Renee (#4) and Phyllis (#11).



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Lew A. Cummings started his small printing company in Concord, New Hampshire, with just two employees. When a fire damaged the facility in the late 1920s, Lew took advantage of the chance to move his company to Manchester in order to be closer to work opportunities in Massachusetts. It proved to be a wise decision. The company's growth caused it to quickly outgrow its building, so construction was commenced on a new, larger facility that would allow the company to change its focus from local commercial letter press printing to sheet-fed offset printing. This change expanded the company's ability to reach a number of out-of-state customers.

When Lew passed away four years after moving into the new Manchester facility, his son John Cummings took over as president.

Times were rocky during the decades that John served as the company president. John fought health challenges, an attempted union takeover and a threatened bankruptcy. But during his two-decade tenure, the company was able to overcome its many challenges and upgrade to a 4-color offset printing process.

Current President Jack Cummings is the third-generation owner, having succeeded his father, John. Jack began his career in the bindery of Cummings Printing in 1977 at the age of 16, gradually working his way up through the rest of the company's departments. After taking over the helm of Cummings Printing in 1988, he began modernizing the company's outdated equipment and streamlining its processes.

Jack oversaw the construction of a new 65,000 sq. ft. plant in Hooksett, New Hampshire in 1993. This new larger and more modern facility enabled Cummings Printing to be more competitive, thereby allowing it to continue to grow. An addition to the Hooksett facility in 2005 brought the total square footage to 100,000 sq. ft., so there's plenty of room

to house a new state-of-the-art, \$9 million Komori 38D 32-page web press.

From its humble beginnings with Lew and two employees, Cummings Printing has expanded to include over 100 employees. Most of them work in the Hooksett facility, though there are also outside sales representatives working in various areas throughout the country.

Cummings Printing offers a wide variety of additional services beyond the expected prepress and printing. These include specialty additions such as gatefold covers and barn door covers; coarse UV, satin aqueous and soft touch aqueous coatings; bellybands, tip-ons and blow-ins; cover tip-ons and

cover wraps; and one- or three-hole drilling for calendars or catalogs that are inserted into binders. A variety of finishing services are also available, including polybagging, mailing and drop-shipping. Cummings can even inkjet mail directly on your publication, even with UV and aqueous-coated covers.

A truly unique aspect of Cummings is its very flexible production schedule. Unlike most printers, Cummings

realizes that life sometimes happens and you miss a production deadline. If that should happen, you won't get bumped as a result of missing your production date. Cummings works with its customers as best it can in providing both service and flexibility.

This article would not be complete without mentioning that the Cummings website is truly top-notch. It states at the top of the "Tools" page that it contains "All the things you need to make your print project a breeze!" and the statement fully lives up to the claim. This writer spent over an hour browsing the more than four dozen topics covered in the Tech Notes articles, covering everything from color issues to saddle-stitching. The articles include screenshots to clearly illustrate the topic being discussed, as well as helpful links and offers. And yes, you can request a project quote and upload your files right on the website home page.

For additional information, visit www.cummingsprinting.com or call John Foss at (800) 647-0035 ext. 232. **INK**



Cummings Printing President Jack Cummings poses with portraits of his grandfather, Lew Cummings (left), the company's founder, and his father, John (right).



2021 Rate Filing: No Bad News

by Donna Hanbery, Executive Director, Saturation Mailers Coalition

ON OCTOBER 9, 2020, THE UNITED STATES Postal Service filed its announcement of new prices effective January 24, 2021. Although the deadline for INK corresponds with this postal rate filing, some preliminary information about the filing may provide some comfort to free papers that distribute all or part of their circulation by saturation mail. The December INK issue will include a chart showing the specific rates proposed for marketing mail flats.

This year SMC has been imploring the Postal Service to take steps to adopt an incentive or discount to help SMC members that include free papers that distribute by mail, shared mail programs, coupon magazines, and coupon envelopes. When COVID-19 resulted in states being shut down, and traditional print advertisers like restaurants and services being out of business – or retailers like grocers and drug stores having more business than they could handle – free papers suffered. Many papers adjusted by cut-

ting circulation footprint, frequency, and costs. For papers that mail, the high fixed cost of postage was more than some publications could bear.

On behalf of SMC's members and the free paper industry, we tried throughout the year to urge the Postal Service to adopt some discount or incentive that would help our industry. I am aware that some postal officials were pursuing efforts to "do something" but with a new Postal Board of Governors, a new Postmaster General and political turmoil, no incentive came to our rescue.

I always look forward to postal price adjustments with some trepidation. This year I am relieved to report that the initial postal rates proposed for saturation flats, whether brought to the DDU or the SCF, will see no increase in postal rates for pieces that are below the break point or over the break point.

One disappointing aspect of the case is the increase in the price for detached marketing labels

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(DMLs). DMLs are cards that are permitted to accompany a saturation flat with an address and a marketing message. The price for a DML will increase from 5 cents to 6 cents. The Postal Service's continuing justification for raising the rates of DMLs higher than a CPI increase is "its increased value to mailers."

Over the years the Postal Service has expressed its belief that it has extra handling costs with the DML. The more recent, steeper price increases for the DML and DAL are intended to cover those costs.

Overall, it appears the Postal Service listened to the plight of SMC members and took steps to "do no harm" in this price filing.

For papers that are using periodical rates, overall prices for periodical products will increase, on an average basis, by 1.456%. This increase is generally equal to the price cap limit for the 2021 price adjustment. The prices for periodicals within the county are a little lower, with an average increase at 1.202%. Periodical pricing is very complex with different discounts and rates depending on how mail is prepared. SMC does not monitor or advocate for pricing in the periodicals category.

I am pleased to share that the Postal Service is offering promotions in 2021 that are very similar to

the promotions offered in 2020. Many free papers were eligible – with the help of Paper Chain, AFCP and other free paper associations – to qualify for an up-front 2% discount in promotions that included the emerging and Advanced Technology Promotion and the Mobile Shopping Promotions. These promotions will be repeated in 2021.

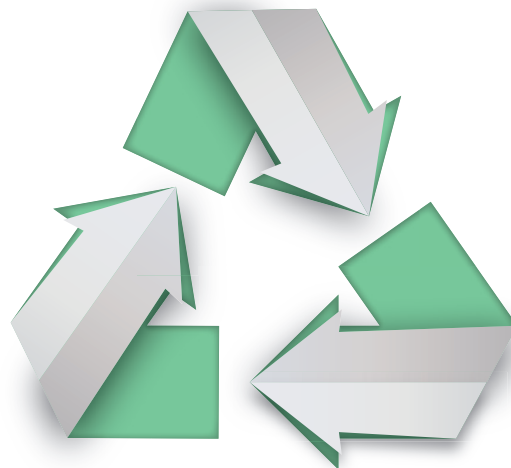
Potential promotions that free papers could seek to pursue include the Tactile Sensory and Interactive Mail Piece Engagement Promotion running from February 1, 2021 until July 31, 2021; the Emerging and Advanced Technology Promotion, running from March 1, 2021 to August 31, 2021; and the Mobile Shopping Promotion, running from August 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021.

Other aspects of the filing of interest to businesses and consumers include the decision to not increase the price of the "forever stamp." It will remain at 55 cents. The price for letters at the second ounce level will increase from 15 cents for the second ounce to 20 cents for the second ounce.

Next month's column will include any additional information and updates on the filing that may be of interest to free papers along with a rate chart showing before and after rates. **INK**

PAPER REVOLUTION

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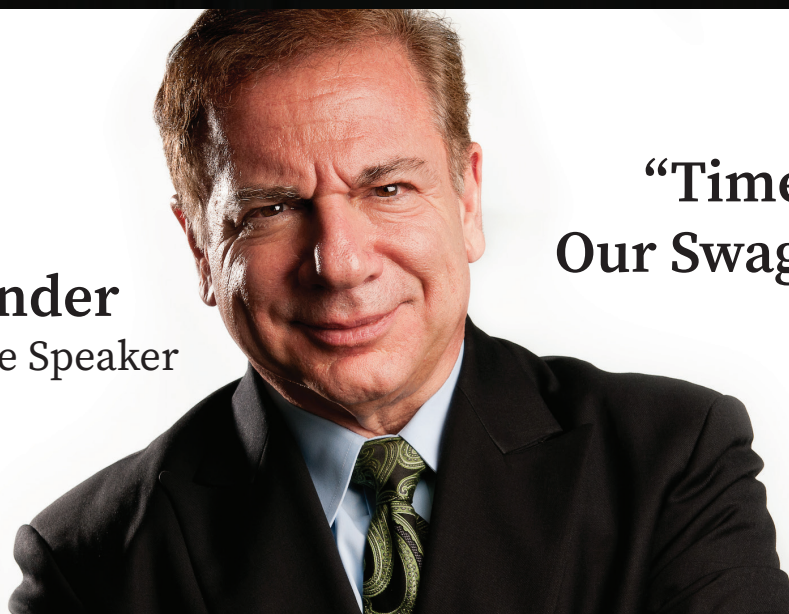
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Graphic Design: A Valuable Asset

by John Draper

THE PRESENCE OF graphics is inescapable. This doesn't apply to just those of us who sell, design, and proof pages

and advertisements for a living, but to anyone who doesn't live in a remote cabin far from civility.

From the time we get up and start the coffee we see graphically created branding. The brewing machine in my kitchen is a Cuisinart. The grounds are Folger's and my mug of choice is a Yeti. I know this because seven days a week I'm exposed to these brands while doing something so mundane as making a pot of coffee.

By the time I leave for the office, I've seen numerous video graphics while watching some news, read a few memes and browsed past photos as I scroll my Twitter feed (to catch even more news, not find out what the celeb-dejour has to say), and been hit with shampoo, razor, and toothpaste brands.

The overload of branding, messaging, and eye-catching design is overwhelming. Our challenge as marketing consultants and news purveyors is to figure out how we can make our advertisers' messages memorable, and how we can create publications that keep our readers' eyes on the page.

There are scads of books and industry experts who can help us with this, so let's instead look at some opportunities provided by this marketing message overload.

If we claim to be marketing consultants, then we should consult. Our experience, knowledge (read those books) and talent are things most of our local advertisers do not have. Ask yourself


how you can best put these things to use to enhance the value of your product by adding a better graphical element to all you sell.

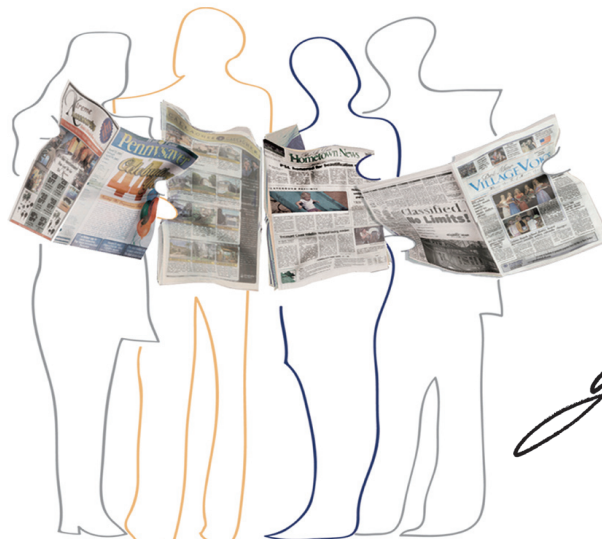
Our customers live in the same world we do. They know the world is overcluttered with messaging and they know they need to be in the game while doing their best to stand out in this cluttered world. They need help and that's what consultants do.

Find opportunity to use your graphics team for more than print ads. Can you create video ads for your clients? Can you resell promotional items? Can you coordinate direct mail campaigns for your advertisers? Work with your clients to help them with website imagery, or design the whole site for them. Just a few things that I suspect many of you do, but how seriously do we pursue these other revenue streams while bogged down in the weekly print deadline rut?

The talent of our graphic designers is an asset to our organizations. It is far too easy to view this asset as one whose return is simply production outputs. But in all reality this asset is critical to all we do.

This is an asset that creates financial return and without the talents of these team members we would have nothing to print. The vast majority of our

customers have no such asset, so make the purposeful choice to use these assets to their fullest. And the next time you're in the art department, thank the team for helping your advertisers stand out from the crowd and for making your publication possible. 

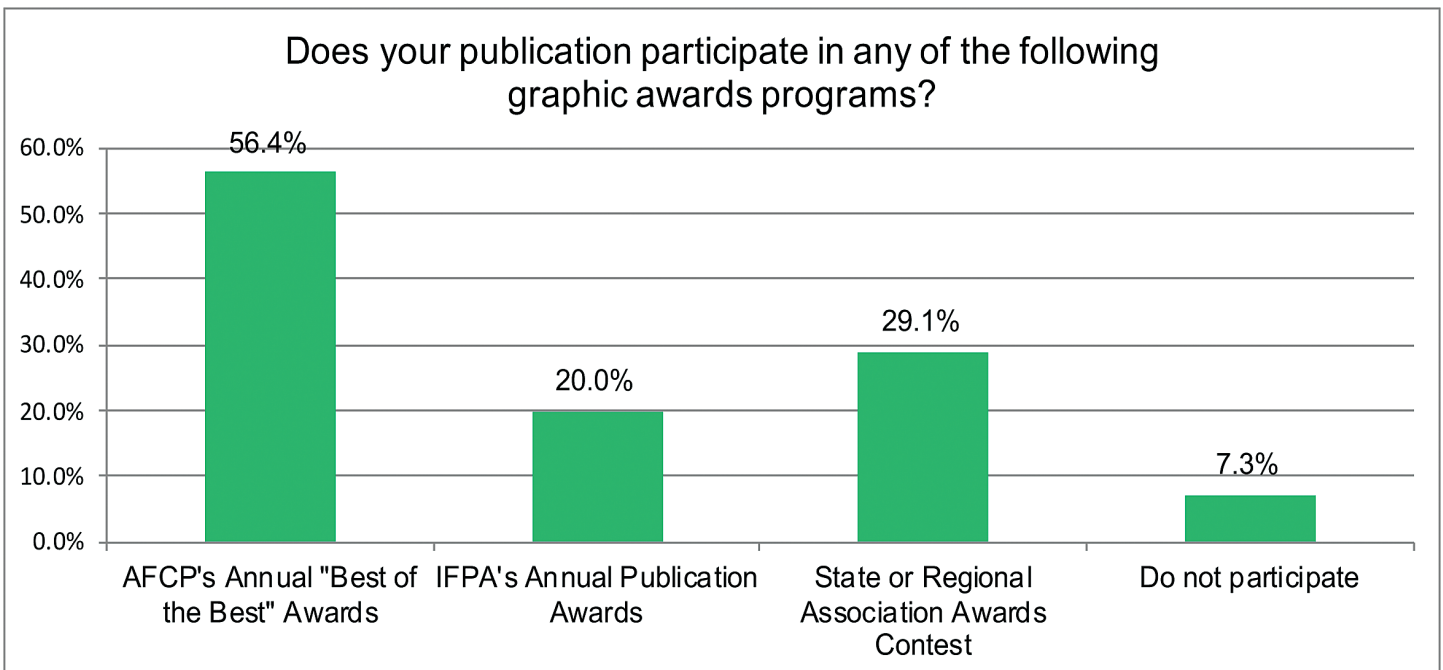
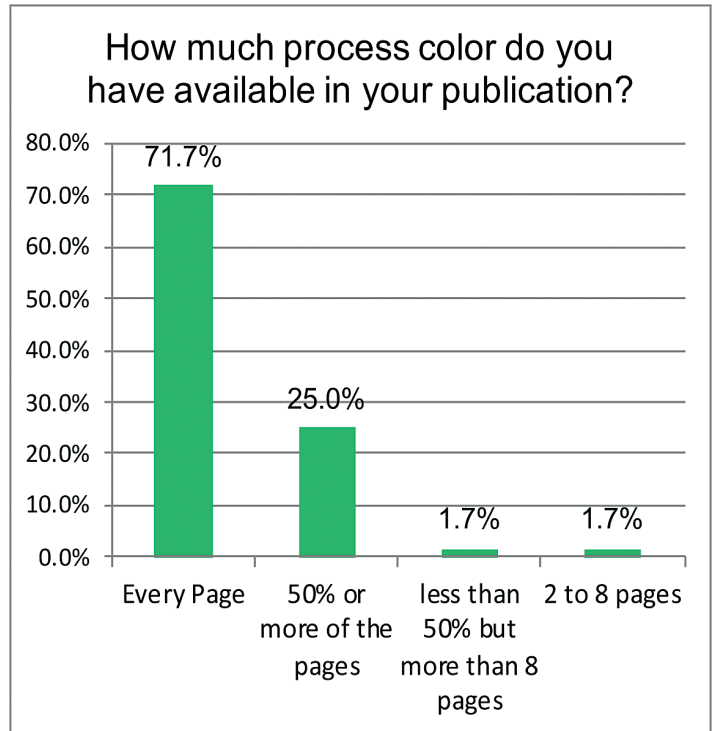
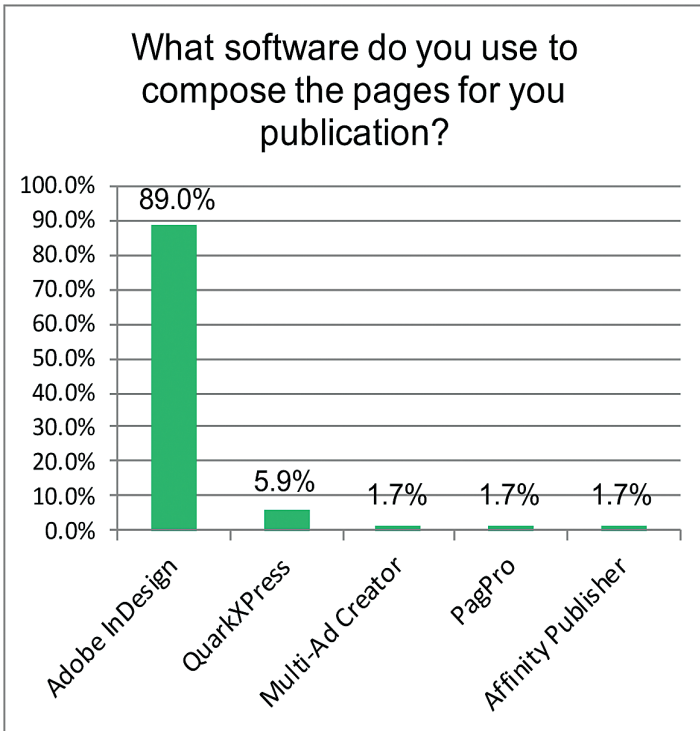


JOHN DRAPER
AFCP PRESIDENT
THE FREE STAR

The Survey Says...

WHAT IS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE CHANGE YOU HAVE SEEN GRAPHICALLY IN YOUR PUBLICATIONS DURING YOUR CAREER?

40.4% referenced the computerization of composition and prepress as having the biggest graphic impact.
 25.0% reference the improved process color capabilities as having the biggest impact.
 19.2% referenced overall software improvements as having the biggest impact.
 7.7% specifically reference the PDF file format as providing the most impactful change graphically.



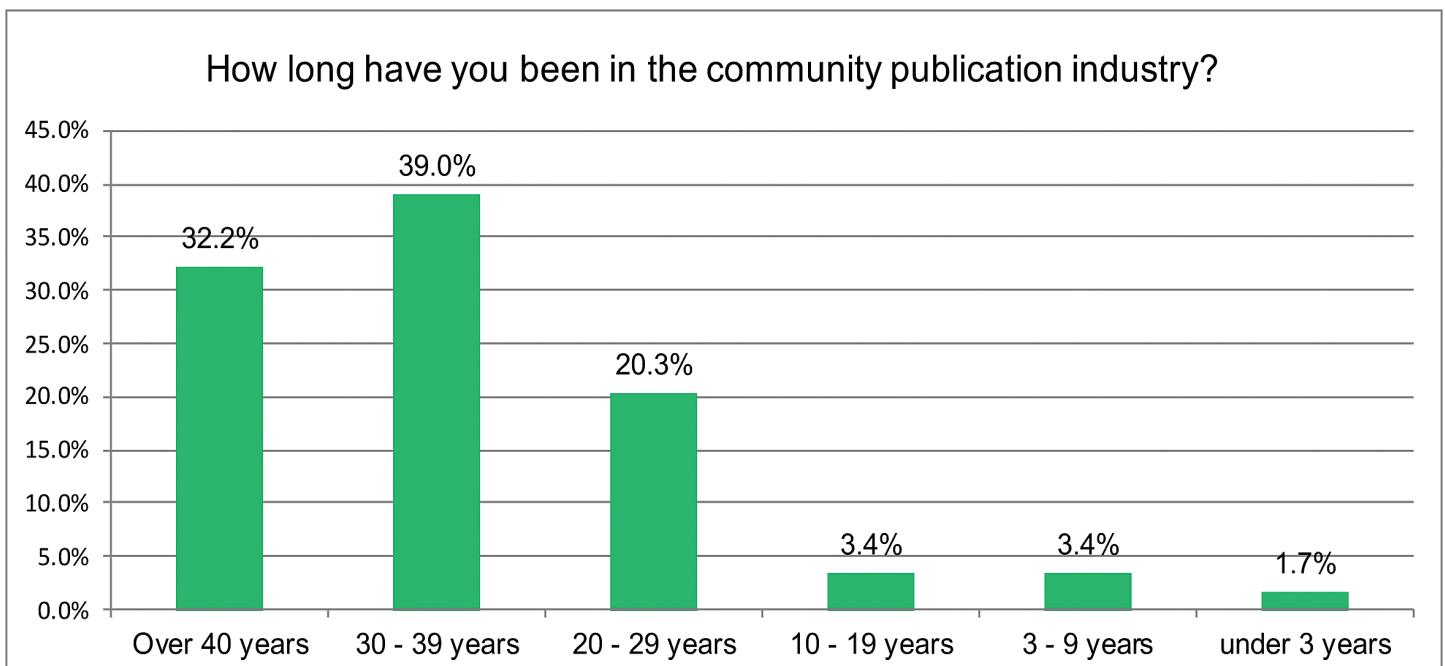
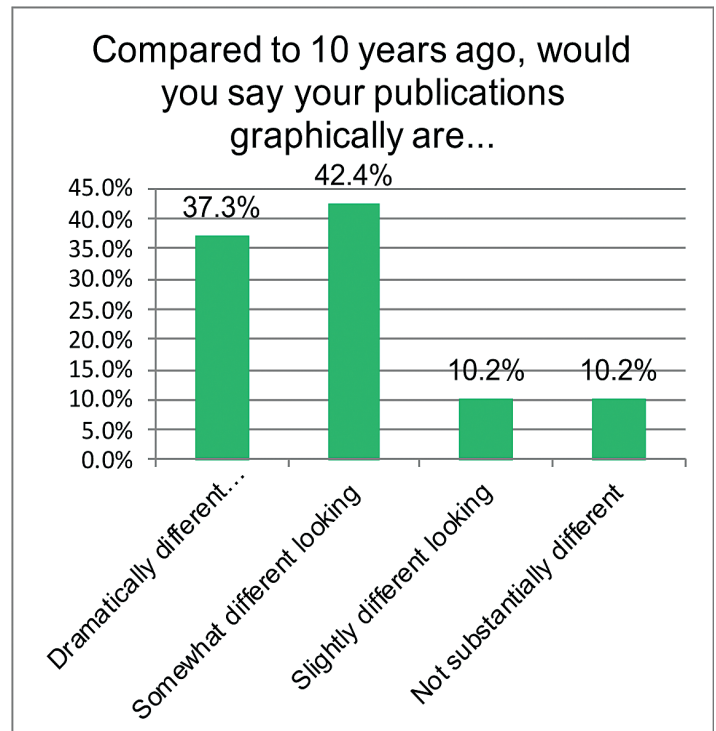
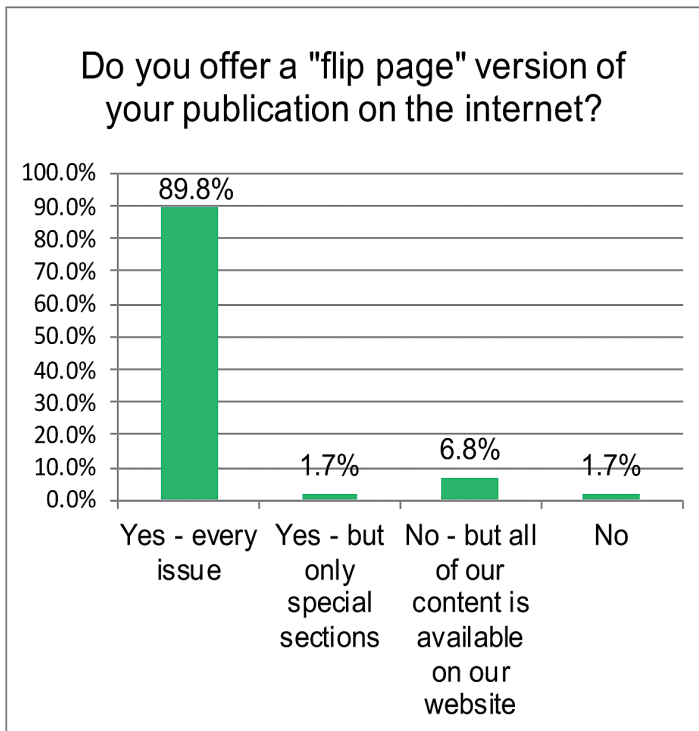
WHAT IS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT NEGATIVE CHANGE YOU HAVE SEEN GRAPHICALLY IN YOUR PUBLICATIONS DURING YOUR CAREER?

22.9% referenced software subscriptions as having the most negative impact.

18.8% said there has been nothing that has had a negative impact!

14.6% said consolidated or outsourced graphic departments have had the largest negative impact.

10.4% referenced lack of creativity and/or bad design as the largest negative impact.



The experts weigh in on What's new in Graphics

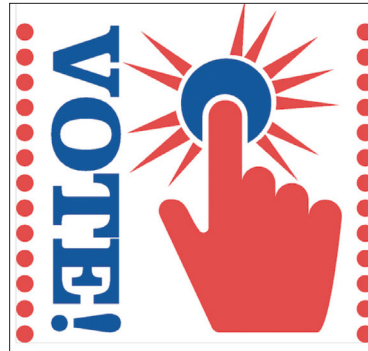
What is new in graphics for publishing?

"I'm testing new software right now that might free folks up from the 'subscription based' software we're currently using. So far, my tests are very promising and I plan to write a column over the next couple of weeks to share with your association. In the meantime, know that things 'might' soon be changing drastically in the world of graphics software."

– Kevin Slimp
(kevin@kevinslimp.com)

"Our Photoshop / Illustrator guy loves Affinity Photo. There's tons of tutorials online and it's only \$49.99 with free updates. Illustrator remains our program of choice for most graphics that we create [at Metro Creative Graphics]."

– Darrell Davis
(ddavis@metro-email.com)



Credit: Metro Creative Graphics.



What new trends do you see?

"I'm noticing that community-based newspapers are getting more serious about things like the quality of their ad design and page layout. It's probably a sign of the times. To compete, we have to offer superior products –including advertising – that work. I'm seeing much more care given to quality design these days."

– Kevin Slimp

"We've noticed an uptick in the use of icons / infographics in layouts, ads, etc. Paper cut-out collage designs are also popular, as are handwritten fonts combined with graphics and neon graphics."

– Darrell Davis

"A new trend is for publishers to out-source their page, ad and web design significantly more than in the past owing to

High praise for the Affinity Suite of products

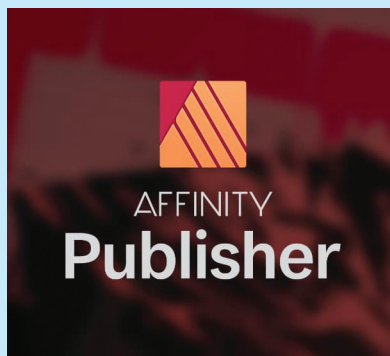
The thing I am most excited about is the Affinity Studio suite of products. With these programs you can finally stop paying Adobe \$60 a month for every person on your staff. I am averse to paying for software each month or on a yearly basis. It used to be that you could skip a generation of software updates because the new features didn't always improve your workflow. So, you ended up paying \$500 every two or three years for the latest software. You can't do that anymore. You are stuck, from now until when you retire, with constantly paying for something you originally bought years ago. Do you remember buying InDesign? Or Photoshop? Or Illustrator? Yes, you bought it. No permanent payment plan involved. The Creative Cloud changed all that. I believe they named it the Creative Cloud because it was a creative new way to extort more money from you leaving you feeling like you are in a fog.

The Affinity Studio suite consists of Publisher (InDesign), Designer (Illustrator), and Photo (Photoshop). These are direct re-

placements to the Creative Cloud. But these have been written for today's equipment and computers. The Creative Suite has legacy code dating back as far as PageMaker. Remember that program? This legacy code slows things down and bloats the software. Affinity is new, has no legacy code and is as fast as any software I have ever used. So, yeah, fast.

But speed alone isn't enough. Affinity is stable, no crashes, and it's easy to move from Adobe's offerings to Affinity's. The keyboard shortcuts make sense and can even mimic Adobe's. You can import IDML (InDesign Markup Language) files so all your legacy ads, editorial, pages, etc. from InDesign can be converted to Affinity Publisher. There is even a preflight checker constantly at work making sure the files you send to the printer or other users are complete and without any errors.

Finally, the biggest feature is called Studio Link. With Affinity Publisher, you can directly link to your other Affinity apps through StudioLink. The first technology of its kind, this revolutionary feature takes



the explosion of remote work brought on by COVID. Once much of the staff was working remotely, publishers saw that subcontracting the work to a firm such as ours could realize savings of

from 50-75% versus doing it with in-house employees.”

– Howard Barbanel
(howard@design2pro.com)



Credit: Metro Creative Graphics.

What are the latest and greatest updates to existing software?

“Most newspapers use the Adobe Creative Cloud, which comes with the Adobe font library. It’s important that newspapers are familiar with this library and pick a handful of quality fonts to keep their designs from looking outdated. Some of my favorite Adobe fonts, all included in the library, are Aktiv Grotesk, Acumin, Bistro Script and Kepler.”

– Kevin Slimp



Credit: Metro Creative Graphics.

Are there obscure software features that designers should be using but aren’t?

“Photoshop Actions and InDesign Scripts are the two most underused software features I can think of, off the top of my head. I use InDesign scripts daily and they save hours of production time.”

– Kevin Slimp

the pain out of publishing by allowing you to instantly switch to the advanced photo editing features of Affinity Photo and precise vector tools of Affinity Designer without ever leaving the app. It’s the most fluid workflow ever conceived in a creative suite of applications, and the reason they named their apps Affinity.

The best part of all this is the price. Each application is \$50. Period. Not \$50 per month. You buy the programs you need and they are yours. I recommend you get at least Publisher and Photo. That is an investment of only \$100 to buy the latest award winning software for PCs and Macs. Download a free demo version that allows you to use the software for 30 days risk free. After the demo period you can simply pay \$50 per program and end up saving a ton of money.

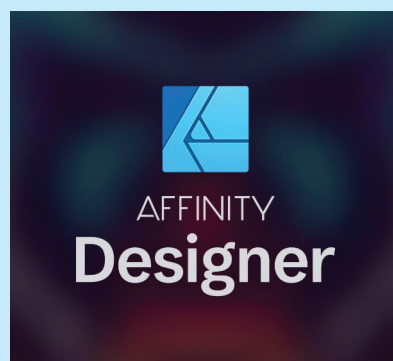
There are a couple of caveats. If you use soft-

ware that ties directly to InDesign for pagination, billing, etc., Publisher isn’t for you. Sorry, you’ll have to keep sending a check to Adobe each month. Next, you could keep an old copy of InDesign running on some legacy hardware in case you need to generate an IDML file. I use Markzware IDMarkz which cost \$150 that converts any InDesign file into Quark XPress, Affinity Publisher, or Adobe Acrobat without having to open the original file. Sweet! Or should I say Suite? Finally, Publisher handles PDFs differently than other programs. When you place a PDF on a page it allows

you to edit that document at will. If you aren’t ready for that level of control it is kind of different.

With all that in mind give Affinity a shot. I did back in January 2019 and haven’t looked back, nor have I paid anything to Adobe.

– Douglas Fry
(douglas@ifpa.com)



Adobe Study Reveals Growing Importance of Creative Skills in College Admissions

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Sept. 23, 2020 — Adobe (Nasdaq:ADBE) today announced findings from its latest study—The Deciding Factor: The Case for a More Holistic Measure of Student Success—revealing that students and college admissions professionals overwhelmingly agree that creative skills are a key factor in admissions, yet there is no easy, meaningful way for students to showcase them in the current application process.

Building on Adobe’s 2019 Get Hired study—which highlighted how important creative skills like communication, collaboration and creativity had become in the rapidly changing job market—Adobe’s new study, The Deciding Factor, surveyed 1,000 high school students, 250 college admissions decision makers and 250 high school college placement counselors in the U.S. to provide synthesized

way we prepare students in K-12 and the demands of today’s college admissions process,” said Mala Sharma, vice president and general manager of Adobe Creative Cloud product marketing and digital media education. “I see this as our responsibility to better guide high school students through a crucial moment in their personal and academic development; while also working with the education community and parents to ensure students are equipped with the critical creative skills needed to succeed throughout higher education and in their future workplaces.”

Compounding these challenges is the severely limited amount of time college admissions officers have to review each student’s application. Students in the U.S. spend an average of 26,000 hours in their K-12 education, including homework and extracurriculars, and an additional

insights on the evolution of college admissions processes and to understand how they have been impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. Key findings include:

- Creative skills rank among the top three deciding factors to college admissions decision makers, yet only 20% of those decision makers report that students demonstrate their creativity “very well” on applications.
- Everyone agrees on the importance of demonstrating creative skills in college applications: admissions decision makers (95%), college placement counselors (97%) and high school students (88%).
- Yet far fewer students plan to showcase them on applications this year, because they don’t know how.
- 69% of students don’t know where to showcase creative skills on their applications
- 84% of students wish they knew how to show these skills in their applications, and 85% wish they had more ways to show who they are as a person
- 93% of college placement counselors wish they could give students more guidance on how to show their creative skills in college applications
- 90% of admissions decision makers believe colleges need a standardized way to evaluate candidates’ creative skills

“This study illuminates the stark disconnect between the

average of 29 hours preparing their college applications and essays. The average time spent reviewing each application by a college admissions professional? 11 minutes.

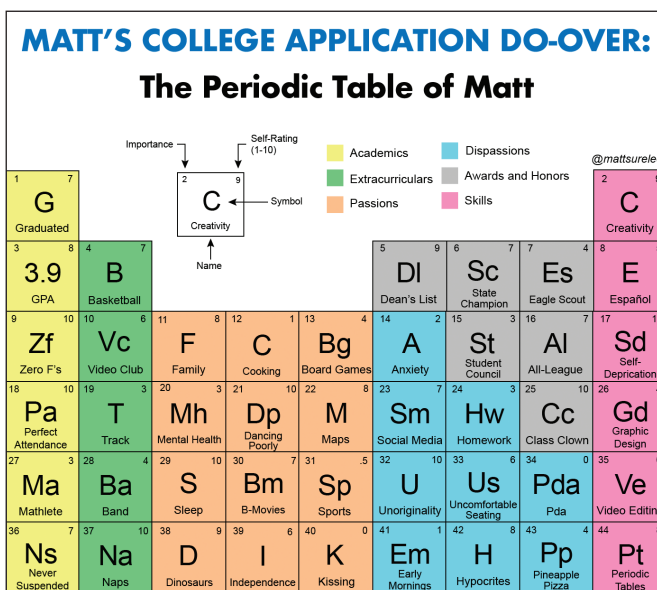
As uncertainty looms this year, students will need to find creative ways to stand out in those 11 minutes more than ever before. Adobe has partnered with some of today’s most creative artists, makers and educators to show students how to showcase their creative skills in their college applications and share who they are in visual, unique ways — where the age-old college essay falls short.

Students can check out tutorials on how to use different creative mediums to tell

their story and package it up as supplementary content for their college applications—learning from artist and photographer Matt Crump, comedic chart/graph artist Matt Shirley and high school teachers whose rap videos have gone viral, Audri Williams and Callie Evans. Additional tutorials from designer Steffi Lynn Tsai, #HipHopEd founder and professor Chris Emdin and more will be available in a few weeks.

Creative tutorials for students and educators as well as additional insights from the study can be found at: <https://www.adobe.com/education/k-12/creative-literacy/deciding-factor-research>. **INK**

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Matt Shirley, data scientist & humorist, shows you how to use clever charts and graphs to share the factual yet hilarious and simple yet complex data points that makes you stand out.

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!

"Any fact is better established by two or three good testimonies than by a thousand arguments."

– Nathaniel Emmons

WE SALESPEOPLE ARE THE RODNEY DANGERFIELDS OF the business world. "We get no respect!"

A recent study conducted by the Harvard Business Review found that business owners felt that less than 18% of salespeople can be trusted. We know that this is not true. Most salespeople are ethical individuals. This is especially true of the free paper industry, because our business model is built on building long term relationships with our advertisers.


Because of this distrust, prospects take anything we say with a grain of salt. If we walked into their business in a dripping raincoat holding an umbrella and said, "It's raining outside," they'd step outside to see for themselves. They just don't trust anything any salesperson has to say.

This is why clever salespeople let their satisfied customers do the talking for them. They make effective use of customer testimonials. A prospect may not trust what you have to say, but they will certainly trust what a fellow business owner has to say about your products.

We should leverage our relationships with our regular customers to collect written testimonials. I like to use these as ads in my publication. I put a photo of the customer at the top of the ad and their letter (which I usually write) at the bottom. I pull out a key point from the testimonial as a headline. "The XYZ Shopper doubled our sales!" These are a win/win, they make great promotional ads for our publications and also help promote the customer.

After a testimonial runs in your publication, you can use them as collateral material on sales calls. On several occasions, I had these bound into a booklet to use as a leave behind. Once a few testimonials ran in our publications, our reps had many customers call and offer to do one. These testimonial ads generated a number of leads and were a powerful door opener on cold calls.

Psychologists call testimonials "third party proof" and research has shown that they are one of the most powerful persuasion tools available to salespeople. Like anything else worthwhile, it takes a little work to collect and produce effective testimonials; but they are well worth the effort.

Like it says above, two or three of these work better than a thousand arguments. 



Getting the **Best Return** from a “Best of the Best” Contest

by Carl Appen, Rising Star

WE AT APPEN MEDIA RECENTLY FINISHED UP our 13th annual “Best of North Atlanta” contest. The citywide ballots have been a useful tool for community publications, which is why there have been so many blog posts and whitepapers about them recently. The vendors are right, though. “Best of the Best” contests are great revenue drivers and advertisers seem to love them. We see businesses use their wins for marketing and recruitment all year long.

Another benefit of running the ballot is the promotion that comes back upstream. As folks advertise the vote and subsequent titles, our weekly newspapers and the whole brand umbrella get a secondhand boost. “The Best of North Atlanta” graphics end up in their print ads, social media posts and email footers. In recent years we have started to see businesses print large physical signs and hang them around their storefronts. All of this organic promotion helps the contest grow legitimacy and recognition, in turn making the “Wins” more valuable to the businesses.

To encourage the hoopla, we typically send a small logo package to advertisers that they can use in asking fans for support. Then when results are announced, the top businesses get window clings and another logo package with “Winner” ribbons.

This year we wanted to do a little more. Instead of a logo package, we created a “Promotional Toolkit” with 23 pieces of “Vote For Us!” collateral. The specs

ranged from printable flyers and display ads to leaderboard web ads and headers for social media, an 8.5” x 11” PDF for flyers, a 1080p x 1350p PNG for an Instagram post, a 600p x 80p JPEG for an email banner, and so on.

The first kicker is that most of the creative remained the same – it was just saved in different sizes and formats. The second kicker is that we put the whole folder behind a registration wall on the ballot’s website. All of the files were free to download in exchange for a good email address.

Here’s what it did for us:

- Flaunted our creative prowess.
- Demonstrated the breadth of our product line. (One of the pieces was a “pre-coded email template” created by exporting a PDF as HTML.)
- Gave businesses a few more ways to promote the ballot.
- Generated leads for the Sales team (433 people requested the Promotional Toolkit by expressing interest and providing their best marketing email).

All for a comparably small increase of work on our side. (David Brown, who humored me by designing the wider range of creative, would rightly find fault with that statement.) It started with something that we were already doing – creating images that our advertisers would then use to promote the ballot. By restructuring the package of graphics and opening it up to a wider audience, we were able to get more in return. **INK**



Facebook Post



Mobile Banner



Twitter Cover



Facebook Cover



Leaderboards



Twitter Post



Instead of just creating one promotional piece for their annual "Best of North Atlanta" contest,

Appen Media created a "Promotional Kit" with 23 different pieces of "Vote for Us" collateral. Most of the creative remained the same! It was just saved in different sizes and formats (see the chart at right) for a variety of uses in print, web and social media. This kit kept the promotion front and center for advertisers, participants and the general public.

Banner

VOTE FOR US
 July 15th – Aug. 15th
 BestOfNorthAtlanta.com

- 10+ Years
- 100s of Categories
- 1000s of Businesses Honored

It Keeps Getting Better!

Box Ads

BE OUR HERO!
 Vote For Us.

				URL?	copy
Printable	Promotional flyer	3.5" x 5"		yes	PDF
	Promotional flyer 2	8.5" x 11"		yes	PDF
	Promotional flyer 3	11" x 17"		yes	PDF
Social Media	FB cover	820 x 312	< 100 kb	yes	PNG
	FB post	1200 x 630	< 100 kb	no	PNG
	FB highlight	1200 x 717	< 100 kb	no	PNG
	Twitter cover	1500 x 500	< 5 mb	yes	PNG
	Twitter post	1200 x 628	< 5 mb	no	PNG
	Instagram post (square)	1080 x 1080	< 5 mb	no	PNG
	Instagram post (vertical)	1080 x 1350	< 5 mb	no	PNG
	Instagram/Snapchat/Facebook story	1080 x 1920	< 5 mb	no	PNG
	LinkedIn post	1104 x 736	< 2 mb	no	PNG
Web	Leaderboard (version one)	728 x 90	< 40 kb	no	JPEG
	Leaderboard (version two)	728 x 90	< 40 kb	no	JPEG
	Skyscraper	160 x 600	< 40 kb	no	JPEG
	Box (version one)	300 x 250	< 40 kb	no	JPEG
	Box (version two)	300 x 250	< 40 kb	no	JPEG
	Box (version three)	300 x 250	< 40 kb	no	JPEG
	Horizontal Banner	468 x 60	< 40 kb	no	JPEG
	Vertical Banner	300 x 600	< 40 kb	no	JPEG
	Mobile Banner	320 x 50	< 40 kb	no	JPEG
Email	Newsletter Banner	800x200	< 40 kb	no	JPEG
	E-Blast				HTML

Somebody once said...

“

There are two rules for success:

1. Never reveal everything you know.

”

Bill Vaughan

We're in the cloud!

- For Mac and PC users.
- Perfect for working at home.
- Accessible from anywhere in the world.
- One software for ALL your newspaper needs.
- All this and we are still the least expensive.
- World's Best Service.*

Scheduling webinars at your convenience.

Merrimac PLUS
 Publishing software

*According to Carol Toomey

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SCS announces contract with the Las Vegas Review-Journal

SCS IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE LAS Vegas Review-Journal has contracted with SCS to install its Production Suite – Layout-8000, SCS/ClassPag and SCS/Track – in 2021.

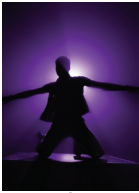
The systems will be part of an overhaul of the Review-Journal’s entire advertising and production workflow.

“We’re excited that the staff in Las Vegas recognized SCS’s Production Suite as the industry leader,” says Phil Curtolo, Director of Sales at SCS. “Layout-8000, SCS/ClassPag and SCS/Track continue to be the standard for automated ad dummyming, classified pagination, and digital and print ad production management.”

The SCS Production Suite will be integrated with AdPoint from Lineup, continuing to expand a relationship which includes implementations at The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Sonoma Media Investments and, most recently, the new Gannett. **INK**

About SCS:

SCS offers an extensive line of publishing-related applications, including Layout-8000™. More than 300 sites producing over 2,000 publications in 10 countries in 5 languages use SCS mission-critical software every day. SCS is privately held by Richard and Martha Cichelli. You can learn more about SCS at www.newspapersystems.com.



Scoop7 is now the Community Publishing System

Sign up before 12/31/20 for a special offer

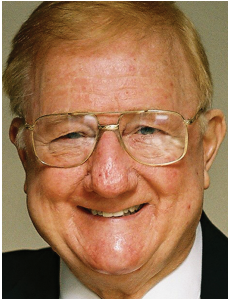
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Successful Ways to Get NEW BUSINESS

by Bob Berting



ONE OF THE BIGGEST WASTES of time for an advertising salesperson is the number of sales calls to call on and close a prospect. Over many years, the consistent message has been that 80% of sales are made after the fifth call—and in some cases, well beyond the fifth call. This effort only happens because advertising salespeople keep calling through dogged determination.

When the sales manager wants to know why so many calls have been made on a prospect, many times the answer is about building a relationship and this takes time.

More Effective Prospecting

Let's start off with some basic guidelines that will be helpful to know. First of all, patience is a virtue that needs attention. The prospect is usually impatient. They want to get into price and product right away which might cause the salesperson to be confused about what to say. On the other hand, the salesperson could also be impatient, thinking they have given all the benefits of their publication and the prospect isn't buying his or her presentation.

Be a Trusted Advisor

When prospecting, it's wise to think about thoroughly understanding the business of individual prospects. The mindset has to be helping them with the right combination of ideas and solutions that will achieve their objectives. This means being an expert in all advertising solutions and asking the right questions.

What prospects do you call on?

Think about the businesses where you speak their language. Are they a business that has the size and ability to take on more business? When you do a Google search for that business, don't just look at the first page of rankings, but look at the second, third and fourth pages where those businesses need more help. Sometimes it pays to stay with the same type of business until you've sold a few of them

Questions to Think About

Really dig into the following questions:

What do they sell—how do they make money?

Who are they selling to—what target groups?

What are the buying factors—what do their potential customers care about?

More Effective Advanced Planning

Check out their website. Make a list of things NOT on their website and prioritize them. Then do a Google search. Many times there are extremely valuable bits of information like "10 questions to ask a particular business". Some of these questions may be questions that can be answered on the prospect's website. It's all about thoroughly understanding their business or industry.

Approaching the Prospect

Actually the best way is still to do it in person. If the preference is to contact them first by phone, then talk to the right person on the phone. Many times you need to ask for the person who is either the owner or a management person who can authorize an advertising program. If you leave a voice mail message, a very effective message can be, "I couldn't find this on your website and I wanted to talk to you about it." If by e-mail, the subject line can have three quick questions, again with the same reference to their website. Body copy in an e-mail is more effective in bullet format rather than paragraphs.

Thoughts About Gatekeepers

Ask for their name. Remember their name. Sometimes you have to treat them as if they are the decision maker. Ask for their opinion. In most cases, they will decide who to let in to see the actual decision maker.

Saving Tons of Time and Effort

The flow of actual contact calls with a prospect can be divided into the following sequence:

First Call—Establishing Credibility

Second Call—Building Trust

Third Call—Solidifying Belief

The goal is to make cold calling much more efficient by saving time and effort and by having a campaign or long-range program solidified and closed by the third call. **INK**

Bob is the author of four e-books for the newspaper industry, available on www.bobberting.com. Bob is a professional speaker, advertising sales trainer, publisher, marketing consultant, and 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.

sales TALK by BOB



A Member Benefit of the Association of Free Community Publications

OPEN MEMBER NETWORKING SESSIONS FOR PUBLISHERS

Bring your questions, find your answers!



Thursdays - 4:00 PM Eastern

Watch for your registration invitation
in your email each Tuesday to sign up!

If you're not receiving the invitation emails or want to join AFCP, call the AFCP Office at 877-203-2327 or email us at afcpoffice@afcp.org.

Associations IN the NEWS

THE NORTH AMERICAN MATURE PUBLISHERS

Association, (NAMPA) announced its top awards for publishing excellence at its recent virtual convention. NAMPA publications were independently judged by the University of Missouri's School of Journalism.

This year, there were 165 award winners in a wide variety of categories. The highlight was the announcement of the 2020 "Best of Show" award winners. They are:

Division A (circulation under 25,000):

The Best of Times (Louisiana)

www.thebestoftimesnews.com

Division B (circulation of 25,001 to 50,000):

Montana Senior News

www.montanaseniornews.com

Division C (circulation of 50,001 to 100,000):

The Best Times (Kansas)

www.jocogov.org/thebesttimes

Division D (circulation above 100,001):

The Beacon Newspapers (Washington, D.C.)

www.thebeaconnewspapers.com

Founded in 1994, NAMPA is the only non-profit association of senior/boomer publications in the United States and Canada. Currently, NAMPA member publications cover 38 states and two provinces in Canada with 96 editions and estimated monthly readership of four million boomer/seniors. NAMPA's corporate headquarters are located in Shreveport, Louisiana.

THE NORTH AMERICAN MATURE

Publishers Association (NAMPA) will hold its 2021 National Convention at the Sheraton San Diego Hotel and Marina in San Diego, Calif., October 3-5, 2021.

The 2021 convention will include many educational sessions as well as networking opportunities for publishers, editors and sales staff. Numerous exhibitors will be in attendance to offer information about their products and services.

On Sunday evening there will be a "Welcome to San Diego" reception. Then on Monday evening, the top awards for publishing excellence will be announced at the "Gala Awards Banquet".

For more information visit www.maturepublishers.com, call 877-466-2672 or email Gary L. Calligas at gary@maturepublishers.com.

THE MID-ATLANTIC

Community Papers Association (MACPA) will hold its 2021 Spring Conference March 19-20, 2021 in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The theme is "Beyond Survival... Don't look back, look ahead!"

MACPA has made some major changes to its Ad, Editorial & Website Awards categories to accommodate the new and unique sections, ads and articles created due to COVID-19, and urges members to carefully review the new categories and rules before compiling submissions. The deadline to submit entries is January 15, 2021. The crite-

ria for entries has already been sent to members, but additional copies and entry forms can be downloaded from macpa.net.

Some of the more significant changes include:

- The addition of a new category to Original Writing, Division 5 COVID-19 Articles, for helpful tips and informational articles specific to COVID-19.

- The addition of a special category for recognition of Essential Workers & Heros during COVID-19. Within this category are three divisions. Division 1 is for Ads (any size, black & white or full color, single page only).

Division 2 is for articles that are specific to essential workers and heros during COVID-19. Division 3 is for Special Sections (stand alone or within the paper, any type of paper and size).

- The Free Standing Insert Category has been eliminated.
- The position of the Awards Chairperson has been eliminated to allow all members to participate in the competition. Tasks will be divided between Alyse and Kasey, and judging will be done by local organizations and colleges.
- Each company may enter up to five entries in each division of a category.

To submit your "associations in the news" story, contact Barbara Holmes at FreePaperINK@aol.com.



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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: loren@afcp.org; or Lee Borkowski at 507-388-6584 or email: director@mfcf.org.

OCTOBER 3, 2021 : SAN DIEGO, CA

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

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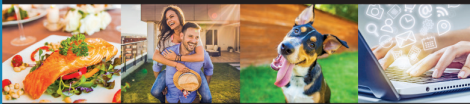
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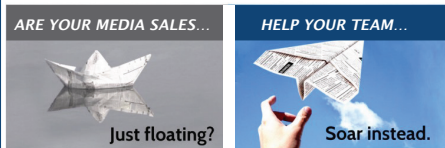
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