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# INFORMER

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**Community  
Papers of  
Michigan**

January 2021

A photograph of a winter landscape. The foreground and middle ground are filled with numerous evergreen trees heavily laden with snow. The ground is also covered in a thick layer of snow. In the background, there are faint outlines of mountains under a sky with soft, wispy clouds. A bright sun is visible in the center of the image, creating a lens flare effect and casting a warm, golden glow over the scene.

**2021**

HAPPY NEW YEAR



By Jack Guza  
CPM Executive Director

# NEW YEAR NEW OPPORTUNITIES!

I think everyone was ready to ring in the new year and send 2020 packing. For all of the changes we experienced last year and at times our world seemed to be in coast-mode, oddly, at least for me, time continued to pass swiftly.

Our members endured months of shuttered businesses and restrictions placed on primarily small businesses, who are the lifeblood of their businesses and the communities your publications serve.

We all know that at some point in the near future, the current situation will be in our rear-view mirrors, however getting to "point B", can't come quickly enough.

CPM's members epitomized the buzzword of 2020, 'PIVOT.' Everyone dug deep to find ways to minimize the impact of the situation and continue to provide their communities with the latest local information, important advertising messages and doing everything they could to keep staff members working, the lights on and serving advertisers and readers.

The new year will bring challenges, opportunities and business as usual to CPM. One opportunity will come in February, when CPM will conduct a Zoom Meeting that we will invite our members to take part in. The main purpose of this online get together will be to share ideas, best practices and to openly discuss your concerns or questions with CPM's Board of Directors, who will be happy to provide their

insight and share what they are doing at their companies that has yielded results. We believe everyone will come away with some solid ideas to help their publications and local businesses do more business. I will reach out to all members with meeting credentials before the end of this month.

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CPM's Board of Directors has come up with a new Member Sharing feature on CPM's website. This will enable our members to provide any page, section, contest or any revenue-generating or cost-saving idea to me to upload on our association's website. We ask that you provide details or the actual promotional sheet for each sales initiative submitted. The idea is for our members to glean an idea and "give back" by sharing one of their proven ideas. We hope that everyone will participate by sharing and implementing ideas. I will reach out to our members when we are ready to launch this in the first quarter of this year.

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Bettie Watson of The Salesman Publications has stepped down from her Director's position on CPM's Board. We thank Bettie for her many years of service to CPM. Bettie's daughter Kara DeChalk, volunteered to complete her mother's term on CPM's board.

While the virus has kept the board from our normal quarterly in-person board meetings, we have conducted monthly Zoom Meetings through most of last year and will continue doing so in the near future.

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I will continue to send my Weekly Sales Tip to our members every Monday Morning. I hope you find these messages helpful.

Sales of MegaMarket Classified Network ads along with preprint and display ads into our members' publications will continue to be a top priority.

We ask all members who are participating in the MegaMarket Classified Network to continue to place all paid ads weekly and if space allows, include our Pay-Per-Call (PPC) ads, too. Dana breaks out our paid ads at the top of the Word file she sends out each Monday, with PPC ads beneath the paid grouping of ads.

CPM's MegaMarket Classified Network (paid and PPC) is your association's primary revenue-generating network. Keep in mind that as this network's sales increase, so does your year-end publisher's rebate. If you have not been a part of our classified network and you would like to participate, please contact me or Dana to begin receiving the weekly ad file. Whatever style you utilize for your classifieds: dedicated classified pages; categorized classifieds; or if classifieds are featured between your display ads, we welcome all formats.

MegaMarket ads have been an introduction to some clients for our association's networks and opened the door to larger display orders that I place within our members' publications. Many of our members like the addition of our ads as they beef-up their classified pages and can help bring more local business to their companies. For those of you who participate in CPM's MegaMarket Network, we thank you.

Wishing you a year of success, health, happiness and of course -

Good Selling! - Jack

# INDUSTRY PREDICTIONS

*Kevin has been making predictions about the newspaper industry since 1994*



by Kevin Slimp  
kevin@kevinslimp.com

As I write this column, vaccines are beginning to make their way to first responders, the New Year has begun, and maybe – just maybe – the world is seeing a light at the end of the tunnel. In the past, I often wrote New Year columns with predictions about our industry in upcoming years. If you went back far enough, you'd see some doozies, including:

- PDF files becoming the method of choice for ad distribution, replacing FedEx. (1994)
- The Zip Drive overtaking the Syquest Cartridge as the as the storage device of choice. (1994)
- InDesign overtaking QuarkX-Press and PageMaker as the design application of choice. (1999)
- Newspapers would be turning to online journalism, using video, audio and more. (2000)
- Editorial Workflow Systems would become commonplace at newspapers. (2007)
- Pocket-size camcorders would be used by most reporters in the future. (2008)
- Newspapers would not be disappearing in the next ten years. (2009)
- JCPenney was making a big mistake by moving away from print. (2012)
- Gannett and Gatehouse would merge before 2020. (2014)
- Remote/home offices will become "normal" at newspapers in the future. (2014)
- Metros would suffer more than community papers in the "digital future." (2016)

- Joey Young was going to have success starting newspapers in Kansas. (2016)
- Newspapers owned by venture capitalist groups would lose stock value and readership. (2019 interview with The Washington Post)

This year, however, being a bit different from preceding years, I'd like to take a look back – about ten months, give or take.

COVID-19 was a new term to most of us. Newspapers were having to quickly learn how to produce papers and find advertisers during a pandemic. It seemed like the sky was falling quickly, and there might be no way to keep it from crashing down on our industry.

In my March 2020 column, I made three suggestions for newspapers searching for straws to help them stay afloat:

- Find ways to bring in new revenue through your traditional newspaper
- Find ways to use tools to bring in new revenue
- Look for tools to help your advertisers to 1) bring in business and 2) help them stay in business

I wasn't just blowing smoke. I was going through similar emotions as my newspaper friends and clients were facing. The speaking business – where I made approximately half my income – was gone, with no return in sight. My publishing company, focusing on study groups and churches, saw an immediate 80 percent drop in sales. We had to find ways to bring in



new revenue, while continuing to publish books, even if it meant losing money on them in the short term. And we had to find ways to help our readers, because we

need them to return when the pandemic is over.

My businesses followed those three sugges-

tions from ten months ago:

- We continued to create books. For my speaking/consulting clients, I've been fortunate to be able to work with them virtually throughout the pandemic.
- At my publishing company, we created two new divisions to create new revenue. One didn't work out. The other has become our major source of revenue. At newspaperacademy.com, we began rolling out classes to help newspapers make needed changes because of the pandemic.
- My publishing company created a new continuing education division to help our readers, which brought in revenue and allowed them to complete their CEU requirements online.

I've seen community newspapers doing incredible things to make it through this pandemic period intact. I know local owners who

have bought nearby papers before they could be shuttered by owners in other states. I've seen publishers start new publications, offer free advertising to businesses that were at risk of closing (knowing they would need these advertisers' business after the pandemic has passed), and come up with other creative ideas to serve their customers and advertisers.

To sum up the past ten months, I'd say it's no accident most newspapers are alive and kicking, even if they aren't all thriving, as we begin 2021. I'm not sure my (or anyone else's) speaking business will ever go back to 100 (or even 20) or more cities per year. I doubt my company's book sales for all of 2021 will match sales in January and February 2020. I'm willing to bet, however, that the work we've done to provide services during this extraordinarily uncommon year will pay off in the years to come.

I'm proud to be associated with community newspapers.

Kevin Slimp is founder of newspaperacademy.com and The University of Tennessee Newspaper Institute. In 2017, he started Market Square Publishing. Despite the changes brought on by COVID-19, he keynoted virtual newspaper conferences internationally, in addition to dropping 40 pounds, in 2020.

# 2021



**By Ryan Dohrn**  
*President/Founder,*  
*Brain Swell Media LLC*

## 10 Media Sales Tips to Help You Leave 2020 in the Dust

**2020 has been an absolutely c-r-a-z-y year, one we'll never forget. But now it's time to jump into 2021 and ramp up for a MUCH better year—a year that's filled with some crazy success!**

The question is, what are we going to do to dive into 2021 with a fervor? And how can we do more with less? (Because I'm sure we're all being tasked to do just that.) So I'm going to share with you some ideas that can help all of us drive toward serious success in 2021. When it comes down to it, these are fundamental things that we need to do consistently every year—in ad sales, in marketing, and in business—to truly become and to stay exceedingly successful.

These suggestions go way beyond the standard New Year's resolutions people make. Because did you know that 75% of people just like you and me fail on those resolutions by January 28? They don't even keep those resolutions alive more than 28 days!

Why? It's because they don't do these 10 things to set themselves up for success—success that lasts all year long and takes them into the next.

### **No 1: Set keystone habits first.**

Most people go straight to goal setting, when they really need to set keystone

habits first. What are they? They are far more important than the big media sales goals you will set for 2021.

But what is a keystone? If you look at an arch in a doorway, picture an old castle if you will, there's a prominent stone right in the center that looks like a wedge. And without that stone, called the "keystone," the arch would fall. The strength of that arch comes from the keystone right in the center. It's that foundational piece of an arch that's going to last hundreds, if not thousands, of years.

What are keystone habits for you and me? Simple things, like getting plenty of sleep. Drinking plenty of water. Reducing stress by getting out and exercising. Things like that.

Think about it this way. Is weight loss a keystone habit? The answer is probably not. But a keystone habit to help you reach that larger goal might be, when you're at the grocery store, to only shop from the outside aisles of the store, and not in the middle where the less healthy stuff is. Right?

Keystone habits are fundamental. What do they look like for you? The biggest one for me is sleep—making sure I get at least eight hours each night. And it's tough, because I love to binge watch Netflix after a long day of work.

So think about your keystone habits ... they're going to be different from your big goals, but they're going to set you up for success so you can reach the big ones.

### **No. 2: As you're setting goals, identify the "why" in the goal.**

Before you think about how you'll get to your ad sales goals you've got to think about why. The why is fundamentally

important to your success in goal setting in 2021.

Going back to the weight loss example, what would the "why" look like? Why are you trying to lose weight? To be healthier. But why? To live longer. But really, why? So that you don't die! And you can actually enjoy the fruits of your labor.

So idea no. 2 gets down to the heart of the matter—and making sure you identify the "why" in every goal that you set. Not just the what, not just the how, but the why.

### **No. 3: Set mini goals to get to your bigger goals.**

See, a lot of times the reason you fail on the big goals is because the mini goals have not been set or achieved. And there's typically three mini goals below each main goal. And when you actually achieve your mini goals, that allows you to get to your big goal.

So let's say, for example, that your big goal is to exceed your sales numbers in 2021. Excellent. Now what are the mini goals to get you there?

One mini goal might be to establish an active pipeline that you're working every three days. And perhaps that could start with even another mini goal—like learning how to work your CRM really effectively.

Another mini goal in trying to get to the bigger goal could be that you're going to learn your sales math, your call-to-close ratios, and then improve upon them.

To sum up: mini goals ... set them to get to your bigger goals. And before that? Establish your keystone habits, and then sit down and identify the "why" in your bigger goals. (Continued on page 5.)

2021

## 10 Media Sales Tips... *by Ryan Dohrn Continued from page 4*

### **No. 4: Become a time management master.**

Heading into 2021, we're all being tasked to do more with less. So, being a time management master comes down, in my sales experience, to time blocking. You've absolutely got to learn to time block.

Let's say one of your mini goals is, "I need to call 25 people each and every day." How will you reach this? Time blocking. Put it on your calendar and make it repeat each day.

Time blocking is fundamentally one of the greatest things I've ever done that's made the most impact on my sales life, my marketing life ... even my personal life.

### **No. 5: Plan to adjust your plan.**

Planning to adjust your plan is part and parcel to your success, because a lot of times we fail at goals simply because the train came off the tracks as we were trying to get to the goal. And when that happened, we simply didn't know what to do.

So, plan to adjust your plan. Just plan to fail. "WHAT?" you're saying. The gurus (be careful about self-proclaimed gurus) always say, "You've got to visualize winning. Visualize reaching your goals."

But here's what I tell people to think about in my media sales training. Plan to fail so that you have a plan for when the train comes off the tracks—so you can get back on the tracks again, really fast. Planning to adjust your plan is really about understanding that the vast majority of people are going to fail on their way to getting to the big goal. So because of that, you want to plan to adjust your plan.

When the mini goal train goes off the tracks, how do you see that it's going off the tracks and how do you get it back on? A lot of it, quite honestly, is simply paying attention.

### **No. 6: Oftentimes, you will need an accountability buddy.**

Think about it. When do you lose the most weight? When you have a buddy. When do you gain the most muscle mass—on your own or with a trainer? Usually with a trainer. You probably need some kind of an accountability buddy.

Now, if you don't have one, you can use your calendar, your phone, an app to constantly remind you. Whatever you use, an accountability buddy is vitally important in your media sales life, your marketing life, and in your business life.



How do you find one? Maybe you pay for a coach. And that's okay—I have a coach, and I think I'm pretty good at what I do, but I have a coach. And that coach is always asking me, "How are you doing on this? How are you doing on that?"

Having an accountability buddy, in whatever form that takes for you, is very, very important.

### **No. 7: Know your deal count.**

In the ad sales business, if you're going to achieve your sales goals, you've got to know your deal counts. You've got to know your call-to-close ratios.

It's so difficult to go into a month of selling if you don't know how many calls you need to make to get a meeting. And then, how many meetings do you need to have to close a deal? And how many deals do you need to get to goal?

To be successful in the sales business, you've got to know your numbers so you know what it takes for you to close a deal. I stress this over and over in my ad sales training.

Here's an example. I know that if I call 10 people and I work them every three days, out of those 10 people I'm going to get a couple of meetings. Then, out of those meetings, usually about half of them, I'm going to get a proposal in front of that person. And from there, about 30% of the time I'm going to close.

So, when I get to 10 meetings, I close about three in 10. And I think that's very, very successful.

But I was talking to a guy the other day and he said, "Ryan, I close 80% of meetings I go on. So I need help closing that last 20%." And I'm like, "Dude, you need to write a book, because nobody closes 80% (without discounting)."

So, know your deal count. I truly believe that if you're closing 30-40%, you're doing well out there in COVID land.

### **No. 8: Recognize randomness when it occurs, and get rid of it.**

Randomness kills your day. Randomness kills your goals. Randomness will kill your love life. Randomness will kill your personal life.

*Randomness does not help you win.*

So how do you recognize it and how do you get rid of it? First, it's very simple. Look for things that work and repeat them. And then look for things that don't work, and don't repeat them. (Continued on page 10.)



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



# Social Media is More Social Then a Source of News

Community newspaper publishers shouldn't worry that social media will force them down the road of last century's buggy whip factories.

Buggy whips were manufactured for just one purpose. There was little demand for them when automobiles replaced the horse-drawn buggy.

Community newspapers, however, serve many needs and provide their most essential service far better than any independent website or social media page.

Hometown publications are credible. All the information published in a hometown paper is carefully researched, written and edited by committed professionals who put reporting facts ahead of being popular influencers. Those newspaper reporters and editors are local community members who are easily accessible walking down the street, in the coffee shops, at Friday night's high school game and in church on Sunday. They interact with their readers every day and cannot afford to purposely make a misstatement or draw a wrong conclusion. Readers of the newspaper are fast to point out any errors, omissions or half-truths.

That accessibility is not always available with the blog writers and paid influencers pouring their words and

undocumented ideas into the community. They often color their so-called news with personal opinion, misdirection or information favorable to their sponsors. Fortunately, many progressive, profitable, hometown publications operate in communities too small to have any serious social media information sites.

Still, in December's e-mail I suggested four reasons weekly newspaper might not survive if the larger metro publications fail. In this edition of "Get Real" I'd like to offer four different reasons why community newspapers and shoppers should and could exist through any number of future digital revolutions.

**1. Hometown newspapers create community.** History, scripture and human experience have proved that man was never meant to live alone gazing at a computer screen. Life can be best enjoyed and effective when members of a community interact face-to-face visiting, working, relaxing, worshipping and achieving together as one body. Community newspapers encourage that face-to-face involvement by keeping readers updated on the important local happenings that are discussed each morning around the office water cooler. More notably, local newspapers promote interaction by drawing attention to the efforts of the local high

school teams, sharing what will be new and exciting about an upcoming city celebration or perhaps through the announcement of the opening of a new business. Social media, with its multitude of competing messengers can't do those things. Only the local paper, lovingly nurtured and published, reaches a broad enough audience to accomplish such magic.

**2. Community newspapers assure consistency.** It is difficult, if not impossible, to retrieve a message once heard on the radio, seen on television or discovered on the internet. But finding something earlier read in the hometown paper is easy. Many homes keep their copy up to two weeks after it is published. School and public libraries keep file copies anywhere from a month to a full year. Most newspapers still archive copies in bound volumes that are made available to the public at no charge. (Continued on page 7.)





## Social Media is More Social... *by Peter Wagner Continued from page 6*

Got a question about a city motion, huge fire or big game 10 years ago? It isn't easy to obtain the information at the radio or television studio. It is possible to find it online, although it might require hours of searching. But if it was printed in the hometown paper, and just about everything that happens is, the details can quickly be found in a saved clipping in a desk or file drawer or by obtaining a photocopy from the newspaper.

**3. Newspapers provide encouragement as well as criticism.** Newspaper don't just report the news they support ideas that are good for the community. They also question ones that seem to fall short. Those comments are published on the editorial pages which often endorse and cheerlead wise decisions as well as question those that appear bad. It's those opinions and editorials that help drive community thought and consensus. While some single-idea blogs and websites work to split the town apart, the newspaper, of all media, is the only one committed to bringing all citizens to having one mind regarding the making of the best decision for the majority of the community.

**4. Newspapers follow a story to its completion.** Unlike most other media which focuses on breaking news and hot topics, the community newspaper follows a story to the very end. Subscribers get the what, where, who and why from the newspaper even if the final chapter doesn't happen for months. Radio, television and the internet sites don't do that. Their news jumps from hour to hour like a child's balloon in the wind. With the electronic media, breaking news often becomes old news before another hour passes.

So, what do those who still believe in the printed newspaper do to improve the current situation and to secure a positive future?

The truth is it is going to take a great deal of work. Overall, the publishing industry has let the naysayers shout their untruths for too long without making an adequate response. Television networks, most especially CBS, have boldly reported the decline of print numbers while hiding their huge loss of viewing numbers under a bushel basket. The newspaper industry lacks a national voice like "60 Minutes" to shine a light on the traditional network viewer's deflection to a still growing number of cable channels.

Advertising on Facebook is limited by Facebook to as few as 25 percent of those who have "liked" that business.

Only newspapers can provide a certified list of what homes actually receive a client's message any specific day or week.

Still, sharing that message with the local community is not enough to save and grow the newspaper industry. The competition in local communities has grown immensely since newspapers had an exclusive lock on local advertising in the 1950s. Publishers are going to have to invest more in their news, creative and advertising sales teams to succeed. No company has ever saved itself into success.

Advertising managers are going to have to create more fresh and unique promotions, packages and special sections to get their share of local advertising dollars. Salespeople are

going to have to stop selling by sending out e-mail and get back on the street where big decisions are made, and it is possible to sense a shift in the local marketing direction before it happens.

Newspapers aren't dead and they never will be. There will always be proud grandmothers who appreciate clippings of their family to hang on the refrigerator. There will always be fans who want all the details of Friday's game. There will always be watchdogs who want to know what is happening at city hall and the schools in an organized, edited package.

It is true newspaper can't compete with Google and Facebook in their bigger world. But it is also true Goggle and Facebook don't have the connections or influence of hometown papers in their market.

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Peter W. Wagner is founder and publisher of the award winning Sheldon, IA, N'West Iowa REVIEW and 13 additional publications. This free monthly GET REAL newsletter is produced especially for publishers, editors and sales managers who still believe in the value and importance of the PRINTED paper. [CLICK HERE](#), to also receive Wagner's free PAPER DOLLARS email newsletter featuring a unique sales ideas and promotions. The two monthly email newsletters contain information completely different from each other. You can contact Wagner can be contacted at [pww@iowainformation.com](mailto:pww@iowainformation.com) or (CELL) 712-348-355 for information regarding his convention programs and webinars on publishing better papers and enjoying greater profit.

I sincerely hope that 2021 brings all of us a reasonable return to a less "insane" schedule. Although, to be sure, there will still be challenges, triumphs and renewals. With that in mind, let's start the New Year with a few of my "doable"...

# Resolutions



I thought I would start this New Year with some of the programs I'm currently using... and I also have some questions for you regarding the software you use and what you would like to see more information about (yes, that means you will have to respond...so here's hoping!).

This past year was unbelievable— certainly unlike any other year I ever experienced— we have all had to adjust. So, I am grateful for "Zoom," because we were still able to connect, albeit a virtual experience. At least I was able to attend the Adobe MAX conference last October, although I still haven't been able to get through the manuals I have accumulated!

At the end of 2016, I wondered whether to join Adobe Creative Cloud, which I did, but still am way behind on most of the improvements and innovations that have occurred since then. The following were my takes on my software programs at the time. Here's an update...

**Adobe InDesign:** My page layout program is still *InDesign*, but there are now so many features that offer users the ability to design for multiple platforms. I am probably not going to change programs or go beyond what I need. I literally have too many years invested in this program.

HOWEVER, I am seriously considering getting *Affinity Designer* or *Affinity Publisher* (first I need to do a bit more research), so let's just say that by March, I will have made the decision. Both are available for Mac and Windows for about \$50 each. No subscription! Also *Affinity Designer* has a program for the iPad (I recently purchased the new iPad Pro) for about \$20.

I do a newsletter for our Camera Club and this seems to be a better option— it is way less expensive and it can open InDesign documents. So this is very doable. Besides, I'm anxious to see what the learning curve is.

**Adobe Acrobat:** Same as above... this program has gotten more powerful and interactive! I have begun to create more interactive PDF files for my newsletters and articles. So still working on this!

**Adobe Dreamweaver:** Yep, tried it, took a class—too intense, too many numbers, too many other programs. Bottom line, it's over.

**Adobe Photoshop/Illustrator:** I've put both programs together because there have been a slew of advancements for both.

My Camera Club has given me a renewed interest in layers and filters in Photoshop and the Adobe Max Conference gave me a renewed interest in Illustrator.

HOWEVER, I am most interested in learning the programs for the iPad! So that will also be an undertaking for 2021.

Finally, another software program I use is: **ABBYY FineReader:** This OCR Program, (Optical Character Recognition) has helped immensely... not so much for articles or newsletters, but for getting text from newspapers, letters, and articles regarding family history or old notes. It affords me the chance of transferring print to a digital format. It works very well on most of my scanned text.

The program itself is \$119.00, but they ran a 50% off after Thanksgiving, so they do discount.

My program is *ABBYY FineReader Pro for Mac*, but I've included a link to their store for a variety of their OCR products—and prices may vary (see bottom of page).

## A few questions...

Because of this "unusual" year, it's hard to gauge what is relevant for you. In 2016 I asked a few questions for the IFPA group, and judging from the response (let's see, four years and no response), I have to assume that I am doing one heck-of-a job!

So, seriously, I will ask some of those questions again. Here goes...:

1. Mac or PC and which operating system?
2. What software programs and versions do you use?
3. What layout topics would you like to see covered?
4. How long have you worked in Graphic Design/Production?
5. Do you create collateral material (special sections, flyers, posters, invitations, etc.) or just do ads?
6. How has the workflow or production of print publications changed for you?
7. What topics would be of more interest to you... Layout? Design? Photoshop? Illustrator?

That's it! Send the answers to my e-mail address below with the word "Graphic Answers" in the subject line. With our inability to "travel," it's very hard to gauge all the changes that have occurred in our field.

It would almost seem nice to set up a "Zoom-type" Conference for those individuals solely in print production or transferring to on-line or virtual versions of what we do. I know that there is a video on "Taking your Publication Graphics to the next Level," on the IFPA website, but how exactly do you do that. What steps do you need to take and why?

Maybe the focus would be on some of the articles I've written... but you can talk back!



Happy  
New Year

## Coming Attractions

While I am waiting for your answers to my questions to roll in, I have prepared a few ideas of my own (consider it Plan B).

For starters, there's principles of design, where we examine hierarchy, highlighting, interference effects, readability, redundancy and more to create effective advertising.

There is also tried and true typographic combinations and how to work with drop caps, small caps, decorative types and how to create type as a graphic element.

The "Effects" functions that some of these programs offer can help achieve visual emphasis... without leaving the program itself.

There's still a lot to learn about Photoshop and its new capabilities; making the best of a bad photo (cropping is a god-send); working with the histogram for better photos and layers.

I am also sure that future ideas lay within the workbooks and labs that I have (from the Adobe MAX Conference) to go through and I am serious about the Affinity software comparison. I still have ad comparisons, too.

I also hope to provide a more interactive experience with these articles, using *Adobe InDesign* and *Adobe Acrobat*... not to mention the ideas that will be coming from you!

The interactive link I provided at the bottom of columns one and two will take you directly to the ABBYY store.

## Final Thoughts

The start of a new year gives me a time to reflect on the past but also to look to the future for hope and a chance to finish what I started in the past; build on the relationships I've formed and learn new things; and hope that the future provides us with time to do all of these things.

This past year has changed how we live, how we work and perhaps a more profound respect for the family, friends and connections we have made over the years. Best wishes for a hope-filled, joy-filled and blessed New Year for you all!

## Stay Safe until next time...

*I was an art teacher and changed to a graphic design career in the '80s. I write for IFPA TIP, and the CPM INFORMER. For info, PDFs of articles, or have ideas or comments, you can e-mail: hanrahan.ln@att.net Ellen Hanrahan ©2021*

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By Bob Berting  
*Berting Communications*

# The 15 Minute Call Myth

As someone who has conducted 300 seminars for the customers of newspapers, I have a pretty clear picture of how they think.

First of all, they do not want ad salespeople who are pushy and try to rush them into buying an ad in their local publication. Salespeople sometimes are told by their management they only have 15 minutes to get an ad and get out. A prospective advertiser is not going to be rushed into a 15 minute call.

Second, most merchants need time to consider a proposed advertising program. Notice I said program, not a single ad. When you put yourself in the place of a prospective advertiser, you want to learn more about each advertising medium available to you. If a media mix is being formulated, rates and relative values are being evaluated.

Third, before a prospect will commit to an advertising campaign, they want to trust and believe in the salesperson before they will open up with their goals and beliefs, which are needed to understand what the prospect wants. You can't trust and believe in an advertising salesperson



that is instructed to get them closed in 15 minutes and out the door.

## 20 calls a Day

I have been told that many newspaper management people tell their salespeople they have to make 20 prospecting calls a day. A salesperson who wants to be perceived as a professional advertising counselor can't rush through each presentation thinking they've got to do 20 calls that day. They will no longer be a trusted and respected counselor, but perceived as an order taker selling ads on a rush basis.

Stop and think about the myriad of things that could be discussed in a sales presentation: the strategy of developing a

long range campaign, use of color, digital proposal, running in a special promotion, the impact of a pre-printed insert, etc. One sales presentation could last an hour. Several more during the day could last 30- 40 minutes. What does that do to the 20 calls a day directive?

## Closing A Sale

Pushing the sales force to close a sale in 15 minutes is not good sales training. It will put pressure on the salespeople. They will be perceived as pushy order takers and eventually hurt the image of the publication. If rejection happens, many times it is because of hardnosed closing techniques. Salespeople who think it's easier to always sell single ads are more prone to push. Salespeople who sell long range campaigns know that closing is done after a sufficient amount of time has been invested—usually by the 3rd call. In my sales training program, there is a 3 call selling strategy I have advocated for several years. This approach is a great time management tool and can alleviate many hours of needless calling.

## Final Thought

Salespeople turn over is never good. Publications need to think about their image. Even though a publication seems to be doing well, it many times could be doing much, much better in their marketplace with more strategic selling strategies that do not include pushing salespeople into making 20 prospecting calls a day—and 15 minutes per stop.

*Bob's newest e-book is "Smart Customer Connections For Advertising Salespeople". You can order all 4 of Bob's books on his website: [www.bobberting.com](http://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](mailto:bob@bobberting.com) or 317-849-5408.*

2021

## 10 Media Sales Tips... *by Ryan Dohrn Continued from page 5*

I know it sounds so simple, but people just don't pay attention. Recognize things that work and repeat those things. Recognize things that are not working and stop doing them.

It's amazing to me the number of people that do the wrong thing in the sales business, in the marketing business, and in business in general. And they just keep doing it. I believe they think to themselves, "If I just work harder it's going to work out."

And I know where this comes from. It comes from having really great parents, grandparents, or somebody who raised you say, "If you work hard enough, you can achieve anything."

Well, there's some truth in that. I'm not trying to diminish what your parents or grandma said to you, but recognize, friends: When things aren't working, stop doing the things that don't work.

Conversely, when things are working, repeat the things that do work. Pay attention to them. Because these are the things that will make you successful.

### **No. 9: Set rewards for yourself if you need them.**

Maybe your rewards look something like this, "I'm going to do this, and then if this is the end result I get a spa day for myself,"

or, maybe for you it's an expensive bottle of bourbon. Whatever that looks like for you, set rewards for yourself if you need them.

### **No. 10: Work your plan.**

In my ad sales training, I encourage people to have a whiteboard in their offices. And I encourage them to write down their mini goals and their goals, and then to track themselves. The reason is, you've got to work your plan.

What's your plan? Work it. If you're not working your plan, nobody else is going to work it for you.

There you have it. This is my roadmap for media sales success. It's not the proposal template. It's not the email templates. It's recognizing why I'm doing things, how I'm doing things, and setting goals for myself. And here's the thing, friends. You can do it, too. And then we'll both see the kind of success in 2021 that we want to see.

Remember, if sales was easy everybody would be doing it, and they're not. So we're either crazy or we've found a career that will feed our families for a lifetime.

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*Ryan Dohrn is a 30-year media sales and marketing veteran with a deep passion for selling. He stills sells advertising every day and coaches over 200 media sales companies each year. More online at <http://360AdSales.com>*



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By John Foust  
Raleigh, NC

# Ad-Libs

## How to Handle Superlatives

Newscaster Edward R. Murrow once said, “To be persuasive, we must be believable. To be believable, we must be credible. To be credible, we must be truthful.” Although he was referring to the reporting of news, the same can be said of advertising.

Claude Hopkins, in his book, *Scientific Advertising*, wrote, “Superlatives...suggest looseness of expression, a tendency to exaggerate, a carelessness of truth. They lead readers to discount all the statements that you make.”

That’s a serious condemnation. When an advertiser uses superlatives, consumers are likely to dismiss everything the advertiser says – including statements that may be completely true.

Fortunately, there is a solution. If an advertiser insists on using a superlative, there are four simple ways to make it more acceptable. Just remember the acronym TOTE:

**(T) Tone it down:** Let’s look at a four-letter word which has become one of advertising’s most common superlatives – the word “best.” Countless ads feature claims of “the best service”...or “the best selection”...or “the best price.” All the talk about being “the best” has little impact on consumers. It reminds me of football fans who wag their index fingers and shout, “We’re number one,” after their team wins a game, even though they’re still in last place.



A simple tweak can tone down the claim. Say something like “we’re one of the best”...or “we’re among the best”...or “we’re working to be the best.”

**(O) Express as an opinion:** It’s a fact that you are the world’s leading expert on what you think. People can disagree with your opinion, but they can’t argue with the fact that the opinion belongs to you (or your company). This means that no one can argue with an advertiser who says, “in our opinion, we’re the best”...or “we believe we’re the best.”

**(T) Use a customer testimonial:** This elevates opinion to another level, because it represents the end user’s point of view. When customers say positive things about a product, they can use language that the advertiser would have to avoid (yes, even superlatives). While an advertiser can’t convincingly state, “Our car batteries are the best,” a satisfied customer can say with all sincerity, “This is the best car battery I’ve ever used.”

Customers’ words have a high ranking on the believability scale.

**(E) Cite an expert:** When an advertiser uses a statement from an expert, the ad automatically has the ring of authenticity. Marketers have used this technique for years, because it’s difficult to find fault with someone who is recognized as an authority.

We’ve all seen headlines that read, “Four out of five dentists recommend....” We’ve all seen endorsements from researchers. And we’ve all read statements from people who have tested and compared the performance of various products.

This is a way for an advertiser to say, “We’re supposed to like our new widget, so don’t take our word for it. Here’s what an expert says.”

It’s all about turning something bad – a superlative – into something that will work.

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John Foust has conducted training programs for thousands of newspaper advertising professionals. Many ad departments are using his training videos to save time and get quick results from in-house training. E-mail for information: [john@johnfoust.com](mailto:john@johnfoust.com)



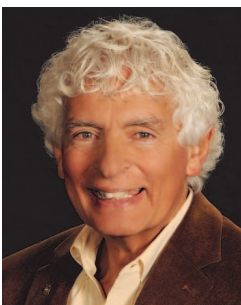
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