
INFORMER



**Community
Papers of
Michigan**

February 2021

**Enter Our Membership Directory
Photo Contest**

Details inside...

CPM Membership Directory

Cover Photo Contest

This contest is open to any staff member of a CPM member publication.

The publication of the winning entry will receive a \$100 gift card!

Have a pizza party for your staff!

CPM will feature the name of the person who took/submitted the photo, the publication they work for and the description of the photo.



Submit a horizontal photo for use on the 2021 Membership Directory.

Photos must be high resolution and will be used as a wrap (Cover and Back)

Panoramic photos would work best!

- Photos must be original and feature a scene in Michigan: City, Country, landmarks, events, etc.
- Include a brief description of each photo – where it was taken, and any other info you would like.
- Include the Name, phone number and email address of the person submitting the entry.
- Photo files must be sent as jpeg or tiff files.

Email photos, your name and the name of your publication to: Jackguza@cpapersmi.com **by Fri., Feb. 26, 2021**



By John Foust
Raleigh, NC

Ad-Libs

A Different Kind of Question

What would I
want to know?

One of the basics of selling is to get the right kind of information from prospects. There is a big focus on asking about prospects' goals, target audiences, marketing budgets and previous campaign results. That's how we put ourselves in position to create effective ad campaigns.

Monica, a long-time sales manager for a publishing company, told me about a different kind of question. "Years ago, I heard about a technique to turn the process around and ask questions to ourselves," he said. "The objective is to create more interest in what you are selling. It all starts with the words, 'If I were in your position, I would want to know...'"

"For example," she explained, "let's say you're meeting with someone who doesn't talk much or someone who seems to be running down rabbit trails during your presentation. Simply say something like, 'If I were in your position I would want to know how The Gazette's coverage compares to other media outlets in this market.' Then transfer ownership of the question from you to them, by asking if that is something they would like to know. That opens the door for you to answer the question and cover an important sales point. It's a way to keep everyone on the same path."

Let's take a closer look at this technique that works so well for Monica:



1. Prepare a list of questions in advance.

"As you do research on your prospect, some questions will become obvious," Monica said. "Experienced advertisers will want more detailed information, while new business owners will be most interested in fundamentals."

2. Make sure the questions are specific.

She advises to stay away from vague topics like "Why is The Gazette the right choice?" or "Can The Gazette stay within my budget?"

"I've learned that it's better to concentrate on specific areas, like audience numbers, procedures, and print and online options."

3. Avoid questions that are blatantly self-promotional.

"It's not smart to ask, 'Why is advertising in The Gazette better than running TV commercials?' to someone who

is advertising heavily on TV. In addition to killing your credibility, it might end the conversation."

4. Don't overdo it. "Moderation is a key,"

Monica said. "Resist the temptation to start every other sentence with 'If I were you.' In fact, you may not need to use this kind of question at all. Use your common sense."

5. But you can put questions in strategic groups.

"This is a good way to establish a road map for your sales points. For instance, you can say, 'If I were in your position, I would want to know three things about any media choice: First, do they reach my target audience? Second, what kind of track record do they have in my industry? And third, can they produce the ads themselves?' Then you can add, 'Would you want to add anything to this list, or is this a good place to start?'"

Monica's approach makes a lot of sense. There's no question about it.

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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



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

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

What Will 2021 Bring for Newspapers and Shoppers?

The “good old days,” when the hometown newspaper was often the only game in town, are gone forever. New digital platforms are arriving, and sometimes disappearing, quicker than an editor can shout “stop the press.”

But digital competition isn't just upsetting the newspaper and shopper industry. Small town and major market radio stations, metro television stations and even the local cable services are also discovering this to be a time of significant financial crisis.

Who would have thought, 10 years ago, that America's host or popular radios stations would lose many of their once loyal listeners to SiriusXM, Pandora, Amazon Music, Apple Music and Spotify? Or that traditional network programming and local television affiliates would lose a huge percentage of their viewers to direct streaming competition like Netflix, Hulu, Sling, Virgo, Disney Plus, YouTube and Crackle?

And most surprising, who would have suspected that Google and Facebook would take so many dollars away from all earlier forms of advertising in big and small markets?

The truth is newspaper and shopper publishers have some difficult challenges ahead of them. Small markets have lost many of their larger advertisers. Younger audiences appear to have

no interest in reading news in a printed form. The hawkers of the internet have convinced many advertisers that “print is dead.” The investment groups controlling the nation's largest newspaper chains have no interest in operating a paper for the reason it was established but only for what profit it can return.

But here is the truth. The naysayers declared radio was dead when television blossomed into existence. However, according to FCC records, there are still 30,367 FM and AM radio stations in the United States today. And in many regions a single metro television operation now broadcasts as many as four networks — including one that is nothing but decades-old shows — with about the same size staff as when they were home to only one. It's called reducing cost and maximizing revenue.



Newspapers and shoppers have one exceptional advantage over Google, Facebook, streaming channels and commercial television operations: a variety and abundance of important and valuable local news.

Still, there are some key considerations that publishers, editors and investors need to consider to stay vital and profitable this year and the years ahead.

GREATER UNIFICATION: Fifty years ago, the newspaper industry was energized by the establishment of central printing plants. Many were cooperatives, but almost all reached out to print smaller publications, relieving those publishers of stressful financial and employment issues.

In the future, the same approach to multi-paper centralization could be applied to other essential services: accounting, billing, ad design, editing, page design, circulation management and postal paper work, for example. The time could come when smaller publication editors and publishers choose to outsource areas difficult for them and concentrate on reporting, writing, sales or other disciplines they enjoy most. As with the introduction of central printing, these additional centralized services could result in reduced expenses and greater efficiency for all size publications. (Continued on page 5.)

What Will 2021 Bring... *by Peter Wagner Continued from page 4*

IMPROVED CONTENT: Being an excellent source of “all that’s local” will no longer be enough. Readers are going to demand, more top-quality content. Newspapers and shoppers will never “save themselves into success.” Content alone will drive change and growth.

But change takes talent and fresh ideas. Thankfully, for community papers, there are many excellent reporters and editors looking to move from some corporate daily to a weekly where they can feel secure and can excel.

Finally, paid and free distribution publications will need to be more nimble in 2021 if they are going to survive. From expanding their news coverage to responding to an advertising sales opportunity, publishers will need to learn to innovate faster.

APPROACH TO ADVERTISING SALES: The COVID-19 lockdown has changed the mindset of many Americans. We have become accustomed to staying close to home and buying, when possible, locally. There has been an increased focus on family, health and home.

But buyers have also learned to be more selective and restrained. Advertising will have to be more educational and persuasive. Local businesses are going to need more help in designing attractive layouts as well as writing detailed copy that will to an actual sale.

Additionally, community papers are going to find themselves creating and managing more actual, virtual and hybrid events to drive advertising sales as well as drive buyers to their

community. The future for print is all about service. Sales teams and creative departments are going to have to overdeliver to succeed. That means providing even more original promotions and ad ideas and investing the time to make every ad the best it can possibly be.

DIVERSIFICATION: Wise publishers are going to need to diversify their strategies, business model and marketing. That might be something as simple as turning open floor space into a paperback book store or digital print center. Or it might mean offering local businesses regular material for their Facebook page or even professional design for their websites. I know of one paper that turned their old press area into a coffee shop. It created exceptional new traffic and provided a great opportunity for their news team to mix and mingle with the paper’s readers.

READER SATISFACTION: Too many papers have forgotten that they exist primarily to report the news, support the community, lift the afflicted and afflict the self-serving. Gone are the opinion pages, heartwarming stories of social interaction, under-the-microscope investigations of local government, coverage of non-scholastic sports and in-depth reporting on health, business and education. In their place are far too many canned news releases.

Readers grew up expecting their hometown paper would always have all the details about all that is happening in their community. They can get headlines, rumors and tidbits from the internet and broadcast media; but they expect to get the details and the facts

from their local paper.

There are many more ways hometown papers can reestablish themselves with community. Newspaper websites are going to have to expand the variety of what they offer while actually going live, for example. Shoppers are going to find new opportunities in areas where the local newspaper ceases publication. They’ll supplement their weekly advertising paper by producing, with freelance writers, lucrative bonus sections honoring that year’s graduates or promoting the community’s annual celebration.

Yes, there will be many changes in 2021. Some will seem disastrous, but many will be create exciting new revenue opportunities and lead to new heights of community involvement.

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 or (CELL) 712-348-355 for information regarding his convention programs and webinars on publishing better papers and enjoying greater profit.

LATEST AFFINITY SCOOP

Is it time to switch from InDesign and Quark to Publisher?



by Kevin Slimp
kevin@kevinslimp.com

It's been a while since a column has drawn as much response as my November review of Affinity Publisher, the layout application that has so many designers, editors and publishers talking. As a reminder, Affinity Publisher is an application with many of the same features as Adobe InDesign or QuarkXpress, but without the monthly subscription fee.

Following that November column, I was inundated with emails from publishers throughout the U.S., Canada and Asia to learn more about the new application. In response, I held two webinars, attended by more than 100 newspapers, which presented an overview of Affinity Publisher, as well as information about Affinity Photo – an app very similar to Adobe Photoshop – and Affinity Designer, which has a lot in common with Adobe Illustrator.

Following those webinars, I heard back from several publishers and designers who took my advice and ordered the \$50 Affinity Publisher application and took it for a test drive. My advice was simple: Don't jump off the InDesign or Quark ship right away. Spend \$50 (which quickly became \$25 when Affinity offered a discount on its applications

that, as of this writing, is still available).

So far, all reviews are positive. Taking my advice, no one reported leaving their current applications yet, but all seemed very enthusiastic about what they've seen in the Affinity products.

There was good reason to wait. Affinity has been working on a beta (1.9) version of their product for months, which I've been testing. It has many enhancements not available in the 1.8 version, which has been on the market over the past year. Until Affinity updates Publisher from 1.8 to 1.9, it just isn't ready to do some of the tasks necessary in newspaper and magazine design.

Here's the good news: My sources tell me the release of version 1.9 is eminent. It may very well be available by the time you read this column. With version 1.9, users have almost all the tools they are used to using in InDesign and QuarkXpress, and a few more.

For newspapers and magazine, there are two areas I find Affinity Publisher lacking, compared to InDesign and QuarkXpress:

- **Data Merge:** Affinity has recently added the ability to merge data from Excel and other databases in Publisher documents. I played with this feature for about two hours yesterday, and still don't feel like I've figured it out yet.

- **Tables:** Publisher has the ability to create tables, and they work fine, but it requires

more steps than tables in InDesign and QuarkXpress.

Having written that, I'm reminded that most designers rarely use the data merge and table features in InDesign or QuarkXpress, however, for those of us that do, they're very important, so these might be deal breakers.

Since my November column, I've been quite impressed at the speed with which the programmers at Affinity (Serif Ltd.) have made additions and improvements to the beta application. The PDF workflow works very smoothly now, giving users the ability to let a PDF file "passthrough" without any changes to the original or to open and edit the PDF file in Publisher. Trust me, you will rarely, if ever, want to edit a PDF file from an advertiser, but the ability is there.

Issues with paragraph styles, called "Text Styles" in Publisher, have been fixed, as have earlier issues with guideline. Frankly, as far as I can tell, everything is working as it should.

I'm sure it was tempting for the folks at Affinity (Serif Ltd.) to release version 1.9 sooner. It tells me a lot about the company that they've waited until they've gotten all these issues fixed before releasing it to the public.

My 900-word limit is quickly approaching, so here are some things you should know:

- Affinity Publisher sells for \$50 (they have



it on sale for \$25 as I write this). That's a one-time fee, not a monthly subscription.

- If you already have, or order, the 1.8 version of Publisher, the 1.9 version will be a free upgrade.
- There are free 30-day versions of Affinity products available at affinity.serif.com.
- If you order Publisher, order Affinity Photo. This will allow you to edit photos while working on a page in Publisher, without forcing you to leave Publisher to work on the photo in another application.

Have I lost my love for Adobe products? No way. My relationship with Adobe goes back a long way. In the 1990s the then-CEO of Adobe wrote to me, "I'm not sure we'd still be in business without you." Heck, later this week, I'm leading a webinar for more than 100 newspapers in advanced InDesign.

But my love for the printed word is greater. I won't be leaving InDesign to switch to

Publisher any time soon. But for many newspapers, it might be a way to save hundreds of dollars each month, with no loss in productivity.

My advice hasn't changed. Go ahead and purchase a copy of Affinity Publisher. Have a designer begin working with it to create ads and report his/her findings. Then, if/when the time is right, make the move to Affinity.

If you do make the move to Publisher, you'll want to purchase a copy of IDMarkz from markzware.com. IDMarkz will allow you to convert your InDesign documents to Publisher documents with the press of a button.

I have a feeling it won't be long before a lot of newspapers and magazines will be creating pages and ads using Affinity Publisher, but there's no rush. Get Publisher, try it out, and see if it's for you and your staff. In the meantime, don't get rid of your copies of InDesign and QuarkXpress.

Kevin Slimp will be offering a 2-hour Affinity software webinar on March 4 at newspaperacademy.com

I used to cringe when I had to do an ad that had a ton of info, that is, until I had to do an ad that gave me enough space...but very little information. This was even more of a challenge, as I had to contend with few words and big space— what I termed...

Terse Text



Life's not fair... We spent so much time trying to fit a ton of information into a very limited amount of space... with a big fat black border no less... and at least three bursts to highlight "the important" stuff. Sometimes it just ain't gonna fit! But, somehow, we always made it work!

So when we found ourselves faced with very little text and more space, or as I called it "Terse Text," we were challenged! Be careful what you wish for!

Both ads are 2x3 (I've reduced to 80% for space) and were done in black and white (Most of our ads were done in black and white as the addition of a color was a little more than our advertisers were willing to pay). However, if you wanted to add color, the **Bookkeeper** ad could have color added to the graphic block backgrounds and maybe I would have colored the wide border on the **Ballet Guild** ad with a very pale color tint in the background (about 10%).

"BOOKKEEPER" AD

So imagine the joy, the wonder, the feeling of freedom... the sheer panic—when we get an ad that has six words and one telephone number! Take a look at this ad for a bookkeeper.

So what do we do with all that space! Simply making all the words really big isn't a very good solution because we actually read groups of words. Making the words bigger may make it harder for someone to read. Think about it, the closer you are to something, the more difficult it is to "see the big picture." So we keep the words at a comfortable, readable size and plan the space around the words to call more attention to them.

On our 6-column by 16-inch pages, these ads are not that dominant. By surrounding the words with grey, we have carved out an area that calls attention to the entire ad and we did it without the use of any clip art.

"BALLET GUILD" AD

Same size ad, with a few more words, but still with plenty of room, and this one does use clip art (from **Metro Newspaper Service**). The art was separated from a larger group and placed to call attention to and enhance the information. The diagonal lines gives it more movement as well as a little more emphasis.

The use of the wide border adds a stage-like quality, and the artwork is integrated into the text, rather than being used to just fill a space. Movement is created by the angle and size gives it dominance in the ad and helps lead the reader into the ad.

Type was kept at the same size to provide consistency and unity and the bold type was used to provide contrast and help the name of the organization, classes and class dates stand out—the important "stuff."

In the **Bookkeeper** ad, the type itself was used as a design element. Since we have so few words, it is easier to get away with this technique. If there is a lot information, there needs to be more structure.

DESIGN ATTRIBUTES

Both ads share the same amount of space and the ability to stand out from the other ads that will be placed near them. Both ads have a "visual connection," an alignment, to create a more cohesive unit. All we are trying to do is pull the elements in an ad together—to make them look as if they belong there in a unified manner.

Readers need visual cues to tell them that the information is a unit. A border is one simple way to bring all the items together. Repeating shapes, colors, symbols and type sizes also unify and help control "visual clutter" in an ad. Developing consistency in handling of any of the elements of

design creates unity. Text is used as a design element in **Bookkeeper**, while art helps unify the message in **Ballet Guild**. Both ad treatments, although different, work because they were designed to.

Design performs many functions—it serves to organize information; indicate the arrangement of elements; produce a planned sequence of events; denote similar meanings and/or symbols; and make visual statements.

Designing an ad (or anything for that matter) is simply organizing the information or elements and the graphic material into the most readable and coherent manner possible.

At times we forget the importance of the message or function of the ad as we get involved in all the bells and whistles of the software we use.

Good design results from knowledge and experience — how well you can communicate.

Good layouts get the message across in an easy-to-read manner; help organize the information and grab the reader's attention.

If you always keep this in mind, you are on your way to develop an expertise in making sound and effective decisions in the design and creation of any visual message.

Final Thoughts

Ads with adequate space and minimal text need to be well-planned before being executed.

I've come across too many ads with type that is uncomfortable to read (too big a font) or worse, too many graphics to "fill up the space." Neither works well.

While unity and emphasis are important in effectiveness and readability in print (and virtual) ads, don't forget that contrast, repetition, alignment and proximity can also help in handling lots of text or the "terse text" that you may come across.

On a totally different note, I didn't receive any responses to questions I presented last month.

So you have another month...

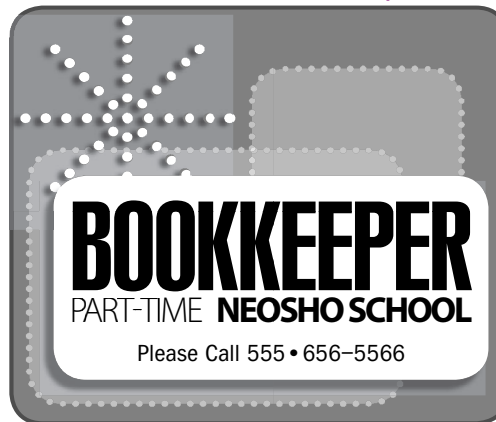
and if I still do not receive any info to guide me, I will proceed with my agenda. Besides, while the design aspect is pretty much a constant, it's the software that constantly changes.

Oh, I purchased **Affinity Publisher, Designer** and **Photo**... now to learn them!

Stay Safe until next time...



I was a student, an art teacher, a graphic designer, a writer and again a student. For info, PDFs of articles, or have ideas or comments, you can e-mail: hanrahan.ln@att.net Ellen Hanrahan ©2021





The Burning Question... Order Taker or Professional Advertising Counselor?

By Bob Berting *Berting Communications*



Over the years, there has been an issue in the newspaper industry, which is how advertising salespeople are perceived by their customers...order taker or professional advertising counselor? Let's take a look at how advertising salespeople live their lives selling advertising. Let's compare the ways they can approach their customers and how this affects their peace of mind to make their life more enjoyable.

The Order Taker

- Is generally called a "sales rep" and could be a beginner or experienced salesperson.
- Could be working long hours because most of their calls are based on selling one time ads and trying to get the customer to give them copy.
- They have to re-invent themselves on every sales call and sell the customer on why they should buy from them. They don't have goals to sell written cold contracts every week for long range programs.

- They keep going back to prospects until they're burnt out going back to them. They can't seem to effectively close prospects in a reasonable period of time.
- In many cases, they've lost their motivation, which affects their performance because there's no challenge other than being an order taker. Many order takers get out of the business because they burn out, get into a comfortable rut, and can never be motivated.
- Many have a big weekly sales volume, but under proper coaching and training, could be selling much more in the same

amount of time.

- The deadliest trap is predictability, the usual trait of the order taker. The end result is usually lost business for the publication, because sooner or later, order takers may lose out to other competitive professional salespeople.

The Professional Advertising Counselor

This type of advertising salesperson has to have the right relationship to openly talk with their customers about the customer's image. In short, the customer has to perceive the salesperson as a professional...and very importantly as someone who the customer likes and respects. This likeability factor is huge. Customers many times will stop working with media salespeople, simply because they don't like their personality. Let's look at the traits of the professional advertising counselor working for a community publication:

- They have a weekly goal to sell written cold contracts. If they can sell just one cold contract a week, that's eventually 52 accounts that could be represented in their weekly sales volume on long range programs. (Continued on page 9.)



The burning question...

by Bob Berting Continued from page 8

- They are constantly planning ahead with all their accounts. They sell ideas in chunks—bringing layout ideas for a month at a time, getting them approved, and in some cases leaving a box in the ad for any feature item to promote. This salesperson will e-mail the account for the featured item.

- The budget is a primary tool of the professional advertising counselor. They try to have a budget for every account which has a blend of weekly ads, inserts, and larger ads for special times of the year. Their accounts feel comfortable with the budget and want to be committed to a long range program because they trust and believe in their advertising counselor. The customer feels the publication is the major player in their media mix.

- They know how important it is to tap the customer's ego and incorporate the customer in personalized ad campaigns.

Street Smarts

The ability to read people is a valuable asset. Many times selling is done so much from a textbook approach, that we lose our sense of humor, empathy, and understanding of people. The bottom line is that the professional advertising counselor is a good business friend to the customer. In most cases, if a customer likes and respects the professional advertising counselor, they'll continue to do business with them.

The Bottom Line

The burning question again—order taker or professional advertising counselor?

It's an issue that every publication advertising salesperson has to consider. The question is about how hard work will pay off if the customer is handled on a long range program and not on a week to week basis with the salesperson trying to

sell one time ads or a special one time promotion just to motivate the customer to advertise.

At a seminar for publication customers, the following comments were made by the customers about publication salespeople calling on them:

"They don't take a real interest in my business. They just want to get an ad and get out."

"Pressure to run larger ads—without reason or logic to do it"

"Belittles my advertising with a competitor. If you want my business—don't insult me. It's irritating."

"Not enough follow through. I might give them a rough time, but I might commit to a long range program if they showed they want to work with me."

Start today with acquiring loyal customer advocates who perceive you as a professional advertising counselor. It will pay off.

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. Read Bob's books and discover how his vast experience and know-how can help you achieve much more business for you and your publication. You'll greatly benefit from the wisdom of one of America's top advertising sales experts. Bob is a professional speaker, advertising sales trainer, publisher marketing consultant, and leading columnist in many national and regional newspaper trade association publications. He is the President of Berting Communications and can be reached at bob@bobberting.com or 317-849-5408.

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