

Publish

MARCH 2021

Virtual Opportunities



THE ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY PUBLISHERS

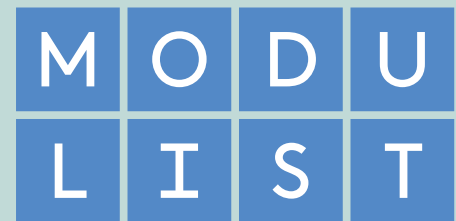
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Publish

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COMING NEXT MONTH

Publish will take a look at all the important details of the April Spring Virtual Conference in addition to covering the people, information and issues related to the community publishing industry.

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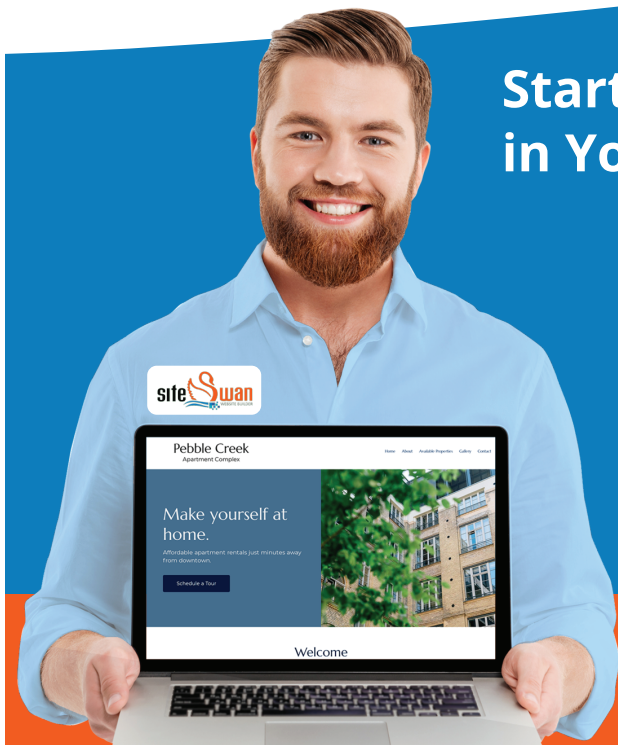
4. Websites Are a Gateway to Other Services

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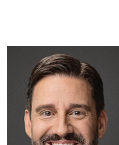
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THE HONEYMOON IS OVER!

“ As ACP continues to navigate its future and the future of its members, virtual connection and training opportunities will remain a focus.



BY JOHN DRAPER –
ACP PRESIDENT

We are upon the one-year anniversary marking our relationship with COVID-19. This has been a tumultuous relationship to say the least. This relationship is one-sided in that we give all and receive nothing in return. This is a relationship that has led to financial stress, and unfortunately for some to financial ruin. This is a relationship that has caused great social change as we've isolated and redeveloped our modes of communication.

Our one-year anniversary also commemorates how COVID has quickly pushed us into a virtual world. This movement was at a standard walking clip then quickly took off into a sprint as we developed means to overcome our isolation and continue to operate our businesses.

When all is said and done, and we divorce ourselves of this terrible virus, one positive may just be the advancement in virtual connections. Although nothing can replace human-to-human interactions that are so meaningful to our social well-being and our working relationships, these virtual connections have proven invaluable over the past year and can continue to offer connections for years to come.

Where have we seen this positive COVID outcome? Each week since last spring ACP has been hosting a Thursday afternoon peer discussion session. These have helped publishers navigate PPP loans, develop human resource strategies, learn about new technologies, and share revenue generation ideas. These are all good things often gleaned from an annual in-person conference, but now available on a weekly basis.

Last fall, in lieu of their annual Publisher's Summit, IFPA transitioned the event to an online offering of various sessions made available to not just publishers, but all employees within a member's organization. The response was fantastic as publications across the country logged in to learn new tricks and feed their need for some sort of social interaction with their peers.

As ACP continues to navigate its future and the future of its members, virtual connection and training opportunities will remain a focus. We are planning for a solid networking and training program coming in April and will continue to offer our weekly peer session every Thursday afternoon.

As I stated above, nothing can replace true human-to-human interaction. We look forward to our planned annual conference in September so we can have a real conversation with our peers over a real drink. Until that time, and in times between future live events, we look forward to our virtual connections....and maybe a virtual happy hour or two. I think we all deserve it. ■

PROCRASTINATION

BY DOUGLAS FRY

The One Thing we are going to look at today is Procrastination. Procrastinators are at the same time depressed and optimistic. Depressed because they don't get everything done when it should be done and optimistic because they think they have more time or resources than they actually do. "I'll get to that a little later. I work best under pressure. Deadlines are my ally." That's a pretty weird dichotomy isn't it? Simultaneously depressed and optimistic.

Before you go to the next article because you think, "I don't procrastinate" let's examine your response. You see, procrastination is our cognitive way of avoiding pain. We are constantly seeking pleasure and avoiding pain. You avoid the harsh reality of the moment by putting off things that are difficult or unpleasant. By not reading this article you

are avoiding the pain of facing how much we all procrastinate. Please read on. It will be worth it because you'll find the one thing you can do to overcome procrastination.

Perhaps an example will be helpful. Let's say you have a customer that left a hostile message about an ad in your publication that was printed with an error. This customer is angry. You know he/she can be unpleasant to deal with. The error was your fault, you overlooked an important item that should have been in the ad. You know the customer is going to make you feel bad about the error and want something in return you can't give them, like a month's advertising at no charge.

So what do you do? Most likely you do something else which will give you pleasure that doesn't require much emotional energy like reading your emails. "I'll call the customer when I finish reading my emails." You are avoiding pain by substituting

something pleasurable. If, after you catch up on your emails, you face the music and call that customer you have overcome the tendency to put off a difficult task. However, most likely something else will distract you so that you don't call the customer.

Does this sound at all familiar? We've all done it. So how do we overcome the likelihood that we will put it off, procrastinate? The answer is found in The One Thing. When you are faced with something that is painful, difficult, even traumatic, think about the one thing, the smallest insignificant thing, you can do right now that will get you closer to overcoming the situation. In our example it could be looking up the error-filled ad on your computer. Once you have done that one thing, reward yourself with something that gives you pleasure. Maybe it's getting a cup of coffee or calling a favorite client. Simply do that one little thing, reward yourself, then think of the next small thing you can do. Then repeat this scenario. Do the simplest thing, reward yourself, then find the next thing to do.

If you follow this strategy you will soon associate doing something unpleasant with the good feelings you get from rewarding yourself. It could go like this: look up the bad ad, eat a snack, look up the customer's contact information in the system, read an email, call the client, when that is done reward yourself big time, like planning to enjoy your favorite dinner after work.

Finally, doing the thing that you are trying to avoid won't kill you, but the stress you'll feel by putting it off just might. By working every day to overcome procrastination you'll become cheerful and optimistic – the kind of people everyone wants to work with. Just don't put it off. ■





EMBRACING VIRTUAL OPTIONS!

BY LOREN COLBURN

It's perfectly normal for all of us to get so comfortable with our routines that we actually defend against letting any changes creep into our world that might disrupt our "rhythm". We dig our heels in thinking we will lose more than we gain with any changes that penetrate our established cadence. Then, along comes a pandemic!

Faced with the inevitable mandated changes to contend with in the workplace, we open our eyes to a new reality and decipher the adjustments needed to adapt to this shifted environment. Here in the office for example, we had prepared the necessary technology to embrace a remote work environment. We knew the cost savings were substantial, but that defensive voice in our heads continued to sound the alarm that communication would suffer, productivity would be diminished dealing with the distance and job satisfaction would somehow erode to a lower level.

Prompted by the directives from our state government last March, we shifted to remote offices temporarily to comply with the social distancing mandates. With some ingenuity and

digital applications incorporated (Skype, Slack, Zoom and Ooma) – life quickly adapted to a new normal. Although working from a spare bedroom proved to be one of the biggest challenges, the communication, productivity and job satisfaction issues were quickly overcome.

Armed with the success of the 6 week experiment, we formalized our plan to give up our office space when the lease ended last September in favor of a permanent shift to a remote home-office plan. The only piece left to tie the loose ends together was a summer basement remodel (for me) and spare bedroom update (for Cassey) to provide for more accommodating office spaces.

Since then, we have adjusted the process and procedures to handle not sharing office space a few feet apart. Our "virtual" office environment has quickly become the new, comfortable routine. I read recently that 51% of people switching to working from home reported an increase in productivity when working remotely – which I strongly agree with. I also read that remote workers were more likely to report being satisfied with

their jobs than office-based workers (CNBC | SurveyMonkey Workforce Survey, 57% vs. 50%), which I would have to agree with.

So what is my point in all of this? If the virtual office option can become a successful reality out of necessity, then why not the virtual conference option – or the virtual classroom option – or the virtual networking event? Social distancing has changed the way we do things, but does it really need to change the things we do? We need to share ideas and information. We need to continue to learn and we need to network as an industry to survive and prosper. Those are all essential parts of maintaining a strong, cohesive industry and we need to adjust and establish a new normal.

In April we will deliver a virtual conference program that will adapt to the nuances of the virtual world but deliver the necessities to meet the needs of the community publishing industry. It will be different from what we are all used to, but it will be exactly what we need to move things forward for our members at a time when we all need to be moving forward. The Leadership Institute (TLI) will also be delivering four classes as part of the April virtual conference fueled by the success of the virtual classes we offered to MFCP participants last November.

Things will probably never go back to the way they were in 2019 and earlier, but that is not necessarily a bad thing. What will matter is the way we adapt to the new reality. There are so many virtual tools at our disposal and it is up to us to engage our ingenuity to incorporate new ways of providing for the needs of our industry within the world we currently encounter. That's one of this industry's biggest strengths – adapting and moving forward...together. We can't afford to change the things we need to do, we just need to change the way we go about it.

Until next month, don't forget to tell all those media buyers, "If it's FREE, buy it!" ■

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5 VITAL THINGS YOUR PUBLICATION'S FACEBOOK BUSINESS PAGE NEEDS TO KNOW



When you aren't a digital marketing expert, building a captivating Facebook business page can feel intimidating. However, with a few tips and easy tweaks to the backend operations, you can create a brand-boosting space that is both informative and engaging. Here are five ways community publications can optimize a Facebook business page to make sure it is effective:

KNOW YOUR PUBLISHING OPTIONS

Facebook provides many ways to connect with your visitors without ever actually speaking to them, but businesses often ignore these golden opportunities. The social platform is also constantly evolving. If your publishing company's Facebook page has

been around for a while, then you might be surprised to find new sections in the backend. Leaving these fields blank actually decreases the page's chance to capture its audience. You will also miss out on trending features and new algorithms that improve page search rankings.

Regularly review the page for outdated information and layout changes that can make the once-stellar content look wonky. Select the View as Page Visitor option to assess how your audience sees the content on both mobile and desktop devices.

Facebook Business Manager is your account and content management system. This is where you adjust everything from business settings and target audiences to brand safety and advertising management. You will find valuable resources

in the Facebook Business Help Center for managing the account, distributing published content, integrating social media channels and monetizing the page.

Facebook has developed a separate suite of tools and resources for news publishers. The program offers several exclusive features, including instant article publishing, URL editing and Breaking News tags.

BE EASY TO CONTACT

The beauty of having a Facebook page is the convenience of putting your community publication right at the fingertips of buyers. Make it is easy for them to contact you by including a phone number, email and website address directly below the banner. Several sections let you insert links for the publication's website,

editor email, newsletter subscriptions and other social media platforms.

Another option is to turn on the messaging tool. When visitors arrive at Exchange Media Group, a chatbox greets them asking if they would like to send a private message. Enable this feature by navigating to Settings > General > Messages. Monitor messages regularly since the chat tool displays your page's average response time. This statistic also appears in the About section for all visitors to see.

USE EYE-CATCHING PROFILE PICTURES

According to the social media gurus over at Buffer, there is a "psychology and science behind perfect profile pictures" to influence audiences and gain more followers. The goal, researchers note, is to appear approachable, helpful and attractive. The profile picture and page banner are the first impressions you make, so these sections need to visually communicate who you are and why someone should stick around. Although they take different design approaches, publishers like Arcadia News and Reminder Publishing both do an excellent job at delivering on this task.

Logos are most appropriate for the smaller profile picture. This displays in a thumbnail-sized circle on the home page. It also shows up in searches and news feeds, so choose wisely. A bold-colored background helps the image pop out from the blue-gray Facebook theme. Like all things with Facebook, expect profile picture and cover photo size guidelines to change.

Sitting above the fold, the cover photo occupies prominent real estate on the Facebook page. You can opt to use one captivating photo or convert the banner into a swipeable gallery. Another route is to create a video sizzle reel like the one used by Long Island Pennysaver.

DIRECT VISITORS TO TAKE ACTION

Facebook allows business pages to add a prominent call to action button directly under the banner in the right column. It is difficult to miss and tells

interested visitors how to interact with your publication next. Our publishing partners use a variety of CTAs, including Learn More to directly connect with the website, Sign Up for an email newsletter and Call Now.

Use this hotlink to make it easy for visitors to engage deeper with your brand. You can encourage them to follow your page, make a donation, get a quote, view an event, watch a video or take dozens of other actions. Enable this feature by clicking the blue box marked Add Page Button under the cover banner. Once customized, this blue box will appear in the Page Preview results as well and can be added to Facebook Ad campaigns.

Keep tabs on the effectiveness of the CTA button by navigating to the View Insights Tab. Data is available to show how many people have clicked the button. You can experiment with different approaches and track their effectiveness under the Action Button Clicks and Actions on Page sections.

BUILD A STRONG ABOUT US SECTION

Filling out this information may seem tedious since most of it does not appear on the front page. However, it establishes your credibility with Facebook, which factors profile completeness into the algorithm for post reach in followers' News Feed. It also engages customers who are actively looking for more details.

In the left column beneath the cover photo, the About section provides a snapshot of the company's contact details, description and overview. You have just a few words to connect the audience with the publication's value. The first thing visitors see is a snappy About phrase, which also pops up when users hover over a page tag. Consider using a creative tagline like Arcadia's "Award-Winning Neighborhood News since 1993" or Cityview Magazine's "Your city. Your style. Your news. This is Des Moines."

Visitors must click the Read More or See All links to access further details and the other sections that you develop, but it is worth the time to fill these fields with quality content. Those who make that click are invested in learning more, so give them the information that proves the communi-

ty publication is credible, reliable and worthy of doing business with.

Even if you tinker with it just one hour each week, focus on building high-quality content in these sections:

- **Company Overview:** A functional description works well here. Expand on the publication's purpose, highlight products and services, or outline the distribution reach.
- **Story:** Focus on the publication's history, what you are doing now and where you aim to go.
- **Contact:** As a publisher, connecting with your local community is vital. Be transparent by including the publication's address, phone number, email and operating hours. You can even add a map.
- **Products/Category:** Several categories may apply to your Facebook business page. Some of our partners use the Newspaper, Magazine, Publisher, Neighborhood, Local Service, Media/News Company and Advertising Agency categories.
- **Milestones:** Celebrate your opening, the launching of services, awards, events hosted and attended or any other good news that comes your way!

Making these simple adjustments to Facebook business pages for community publications can yield a great return on your time investment. ■

Citations

Facebook Business Help Center, <https://www.facebook.com/business/help>

Hubspot, Neil Patel, "How to Create the Best Facebook Business Page" <https://neilpatel.com/blog/create-facebook-business-page/>

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Hootsuite, AdEspresso, Ana Gotter, "How to Master Facebook Business Manager (the 2020 Guide)" <https://adespresso.com/blog/facebook-business-manager-guide/>

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ADJUSTING FOR VIRTUAL EVENTS!

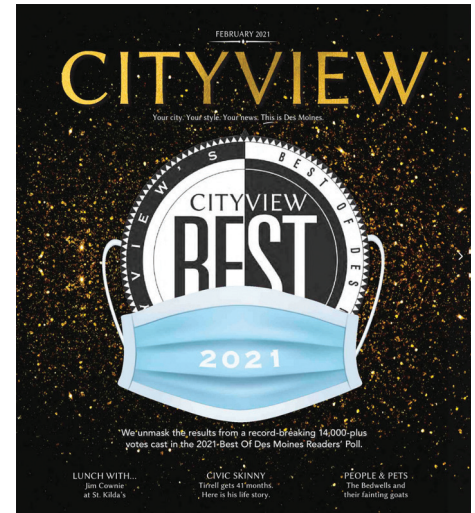
BY RENÉE K. GADOUA

For 13 years, CITYVIEW magazine has hosted a public celebration to toast the winners of their annual Best of Des Moines contest. COVID-19 health precautions nixed the 2021 in-person affair, though, and CITYVIEW staff developed a virtual program instead.

About 1,000 people attended in recent years, and the monthly magazine typically enjoyed healthy sponsorship

and ad sales for the popular event, which celebrates reader favorites in six categories.

“I set up my iPhone on a tripod and a black background and rented a tux,” said Shane Goodman, president of Big Green Umbrella Media, which owns 13 community-based lifestyle magazines in the Des Moines, Iowa, area. “It’s by no means a professional effort. But by and large it looks pretty good.”



He recorded six 20-minute segments – one for each Best of Des Moines category. Each “event” announced the finalists for each poll question and the top vote-getter from the magazine’s readers. CITYVIEW released the videos on the magazine’s YouTube channel at lunchtime on six consecutive days in early February.

Goodman knew that after people had attended endless (and sometimes technically frustrating) Zoom meetings for months, it would be a challenge to hold people’s attention for long. “The advice I got was, ‘If you expect people to tune in at 5 p.m., forget it,’” he said. “But we thought people would watch at noon with a sandwich.”

The annual readers’ best contest drew a record 14,000 votes this year. But ads and sponsorship sales were down. Goodman’s assessment: “It didn’t have the same sizzle by any means, but it worked OK.”

Goodman led a session called Social Media Myths at the virtual Independent Free Papers of America conference in September 2020 (no tux that time.) He’s also on the planning committee for the upcoming Association of Community Publishers (ACP) conference, which will be held virtually in April.

He’s sharing challenges and opportunities he’s learned with the ACP conference planning group. For example: “There’s no stress on the day of events, as all the work was done in advance,” he said. “If the sessions are recorded, you can go back to it.”



Shane and Jolene Goodman at their 2019 Best of the Best Event

INDUSTRY EVENTS

Virtual events may draw a bigger, more geographically diverse audience than in-person events, but that comes with some caveats, Goodman noted. A week after the Best of Des Moines videos went live, the six videos had drawn about 2,000 views total – about twice the 2020 in-person attendance.

“It’s tougher to measure it, but there’s ups and downs,” he said. “Some people may have watched it more than once, and one viewer may have had 10 people in the room.”

Businesses of all kinds have lost income during the pandemic. Also lost during a year of shuttered offices and work-from-home arrangements: team building, networking and serendipitous connections that spark creativity.

“We go to conferences like this to get ideas from others,” Goodman said. “Usually we get pieces from that in the sessions and get more at breakfast or lunch or having a drink at a social event. You might not use that contact right away. Sometimes six months down the road you say, ‘I know a guy who does this.’”

The planning committee hopes the conference will include some interactive elements and an online social event to build relationships. “Networking is always the No. 1 benefit for conference attendees, and we could all use that now,” Goodman said. “It will be good to have at least some contact with other publishers.”

Donna Anderson, president of On-Line Publishers, Inc., plans to speak at the ACP conference about her company’s pandemic pivot experience. The company produces publications and events in Pennsylvania’s Susquehanna and Delaware valleys. Its daylong Women’s and 50 Plus Expos – 160 events over 25 years – account for a large portion of the company’s income.

“Things we had been doing for many years we could no longer do,” Anderson said. “To flip to virtual was nothing short of miraculous.”

When Pennsylvania barred public events, “attendees felt the impact, but more impactful was the hit our exhibitors and vendors felt,” she said. Her Women’s Expos typically draw about 2,000 attendees and 100 vendors. Her last in-person event was in July, before Pennsylvania’s governor barred in-person events.

Anderson already had a head start on online programming. Before the pandemic, she had been exploring potential online platforms to present job fairs during Pennsylvania’s snowy winters. But she learned the options were expensive, and no platform specifically applied to tradeshow.

“For print publishing professionals nervous about virtual events, ‘Just try. ‘Don’t expect a 100% result. It’s like when we started our publications: You just gotta get the wheels rolling.”

– Shane Goodman

So they improvised when the pandemic shifted their business online. “We worked with a company that had a template that didn’t work for us, so we had to adapt it. We had to make it work. We had 15 events we had to get in before the end of the year,” she said. “Development would have taken months and we had weeks. It was ugly, but we made it happen.”

She hopes to resume in-person events as early as May. “You can’t have 60 percent of your revenue just stop,” she said. “We have 25-year relationships and people want to do things in person.”

She sees potential for virtual programming as a revenue stream. “My feeling is it’s been a hard year for our team and I don’t want to throw that at them now,” she said. “We’re going to stay laser focused on our core programming. There may be some people who have the bandwidth for that and I can share our experience.”

Some companies already operated virtually before the pandemic. “Going virtual forced us to make some of the changes that we had been trying to make as far as paperless ad submission,” Cristie Leone, creative director at Genesee Valley Penny Saver in Avon, New York, said in an email. “When we didn’t have the comfort of falling back on the traditional paperless submission we quickly realized that paperless had many advantages.”

The staff has “become fairly adept at Zoom, Microsoft Teams (for us), Google Teams etc.,” Steve Harrison, publisher, said in an email. Success requires literal bandwidth. He’s participated in a weekly publisher roundtable since March 2020 “and there’s no problem except for the occasional ‘freezing’ of the person who is talking,” he wrote.

An industry conference Harrison attended virtually in January “went very well and the sessions were recorded so that if you missed a session, you could play it back. I doubt you have full attendance for every session, but having them spaced out will allow your attendees flexibility.”

On virtual networking, Harrison offered practical advice: allow time at the end of each session for questions and answers, and provide contact information for follow-up.

Goodman agrees that pandemic restrictions “forced us to learn the technology,” adding, “We can integrate that down the road,” he said. “COVID-19 might come and go. But other things could come along and we’ll be better prepared.”

For print publishing professionals nervous about virtual events, “Just try,” Goodman said. “Don’t expect a 100% result. It’s like when we started our publications: You just gotta get the wheels rolling.” ■

Renée K. Gadoua is a freelance writer and editor based in Central New York and a journalism instructor at Ca-zenovia College. Follow her on Twitter @ReneeKGadoua.

SPRING VIRTUAL CONFERENCE – Program Outline

VIRTUAL EVENT PRESENTATIONS

These 55 minute virtual presentations will provide attendees information targeted at business improvements for the publishers. The program will run four consecutive Fridays beginning on April 9, 2021 and concluding on April 30, 2021. Each Friday there will be a session that begins at 12:00 PM EDT, a 5 minute break and then a second presentation that begins at 1:00 PM EDT. The specific order of these presentations will be determined and announced in a series of e-blasts to from ACP as well as next month's Publish Magazine, but here is the presentation lineup that will include improvement ideas for any and all publications.

- **8 things every publisher should track & share.**

Metrics are an excellent way to monitor the health of your business in many areas. Learn some simple calculations that will help you discover strengths and weaknesses and track performance improvements.

- **7 ways to engage your reader.**

Competition for your reader's time and attention gets greater all the time. Learn effective, affordable ways to up your reader engagement, from contests, in-paper promotions and more.

- **6 ways to improve your publication's brand.**

Your brand is the sum total of your customers' perceptions, notions and experience. It is the face, personality and the values espoused by your business – and everything in between. Some simple tips to move it in the right direction utilizing print, video, social media and more.

- **5 special sections that will work in any market.**

Special sections offer opportunities for revenue growth and advertiser excitement. Here are some that will work in any size market.

- **4 print & digital package ideas your reps will want to embrace.**

Combining print advertising and digital advertising can be difficult for your sales team. Here are some tips to increase acceptance and results.

- **3 R's of building your sales team (Recruiting / Rewards / Retention).**

Tips on finding and keeping sales professionals that will build your business with Elaine Buckley.

- **2 Approaches to virtual events.**

Learn how two companies have incorporated virtual events to support their local events during the pandemic. The virtual option can hold on to existing business when in-person options are not available.

- **1 great idea to share – idea exchange.**

The traditional “3-minute” idea exchange holds the key to a variety of business improvement opportunities. From cost savings to revenue growth, you are sure to find something to utilize right away.

VIRTUAL EVENT TLI CLASSES

In addition to the eight presentations listed above, The Leadership Institute will deliver four TLI classes on consecutive Thursdays beginning on April 8, 2021 at 11:00 AM EDT, and each of the next three Thursdays at the same time. These classes will be presented by the Dean of TLI, Rob Zarrilli who is sure to pack the sessions with sales building material and the energy to make the 55 minute sessions just fly by.

These class presentations will require pre-registration for anyone who wishes to earn TLI credits toward their CAE Certification and attendance will be monitored and recorded for verification. If you thought Tuesdays with Morrie was filled with lessons, wait until you try Thursdays with Rob! Here is the class lineup for April.

- **TLI 105 – Communicating Through Listening** – Discover the power of effective communication through a variety of listening concepts and techniques.
- **TLI 247 – Building and Delivering Effective Sales Scripts** – Without an effective sales script, your sales call can end up like a poorly told story. Learn to put together scripts that will engage your listener and keep your sales call on track.
- **TLI 103 – Answering Today's Sales Objections** – No good sale is ever won without a fight! Prepare yourself for sales combat by learning how to uncover, confront and overcome today's common sales objections.
- **TLI 248 – The Soul of the Team** – For most people, succeeding in life requires mastering the art of teamwork. Whether at work, school, church, or home, virtually everyone is part of a team—and when they work well, teams can accomplish more than individuals working by themselves. Learn the four simple yet highly effective principles that separate the truly great teams from the mediocre ones.

TOPICAL DISCUSSION SESSIONS

Following the TLI Classes on both April 15, 2021 and April 29, 2021, there will be presentations targeted to specific areas for your publication business. The program on April 15th will be circulation focused and the program for April 29th will be focused on the Affinity Suite of products. The first portion of the session will be a presentation and the second portion will be an opportunity for industry professionals to have an open discussion on issues and topics they will bring to the table. Each session will be limited to 90 information packed minutes.

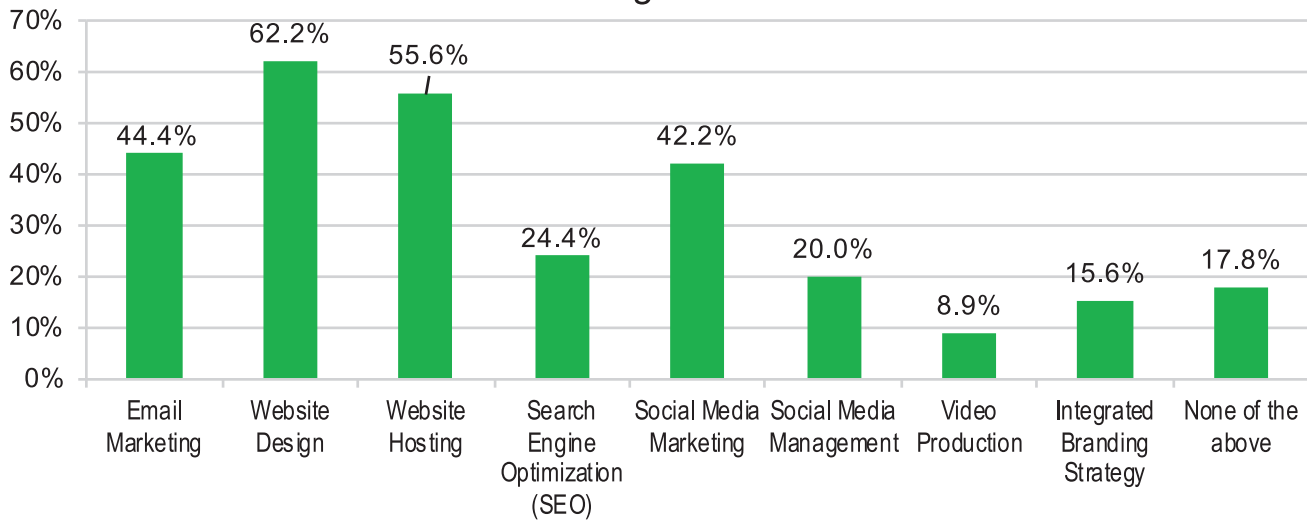
- **April 15 – Circulation Session** – The opening presentation will be a case study of transitioning to requestor publication status for potential postage savings. The second part of the program will be an opportunity for circulation professionals to ask questions, share ideas and common issues facing their operations.
- **April 29 – Graphics Session** – Are you tired of sending your hard earned money to Adobe each month for software? The solution is here now using the Affinity Suite of products. Learn how Publisher can replace InDesign, Design can replace Illustrator, and Photo can replace Photoshop. The best part is the price. It's only \$150 for the whole suite, period. Not \$150 per month, but a lifetime. See the products in action in this fast-paced demonstration by someone who uses it every day.

Mark your calendars and stay tuned for more details!

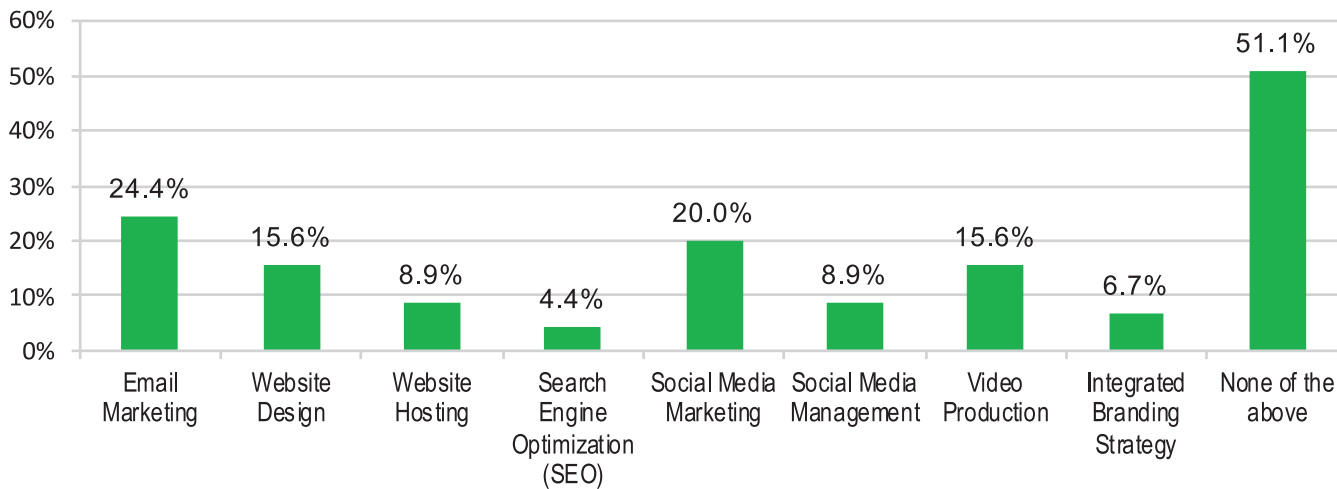
THE SURVEY SAYS...



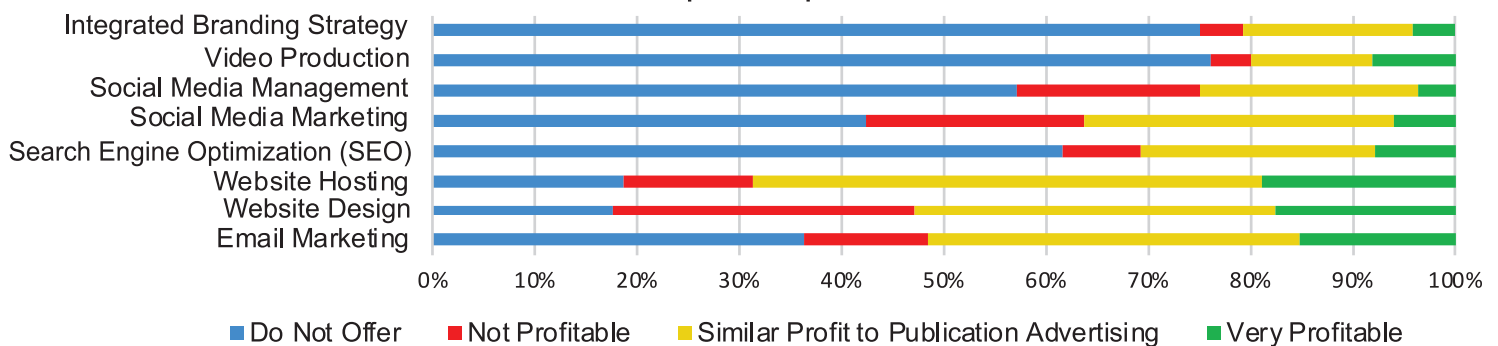
Which of the following are currently part of your product and service offering to advertisers?



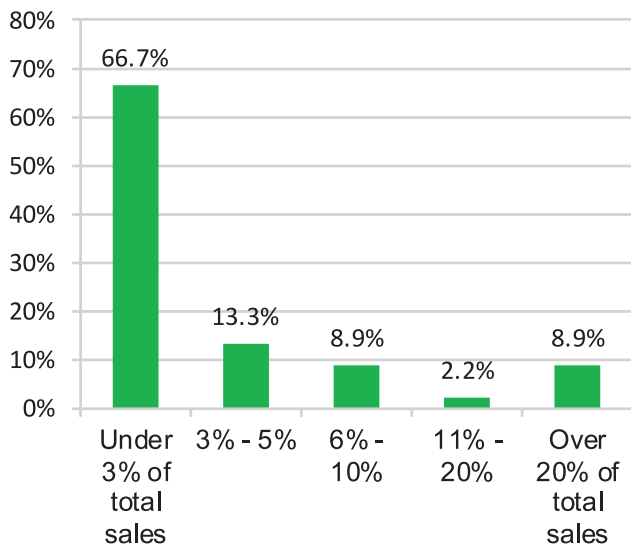
Which of these digital products are you planning to add to your offerings to advertisers in the next 10 months?



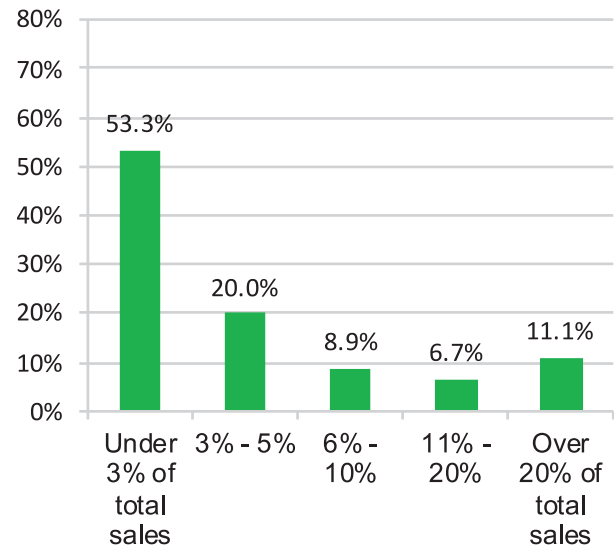
If you offer any of the following, what is the profitability of that specific product?



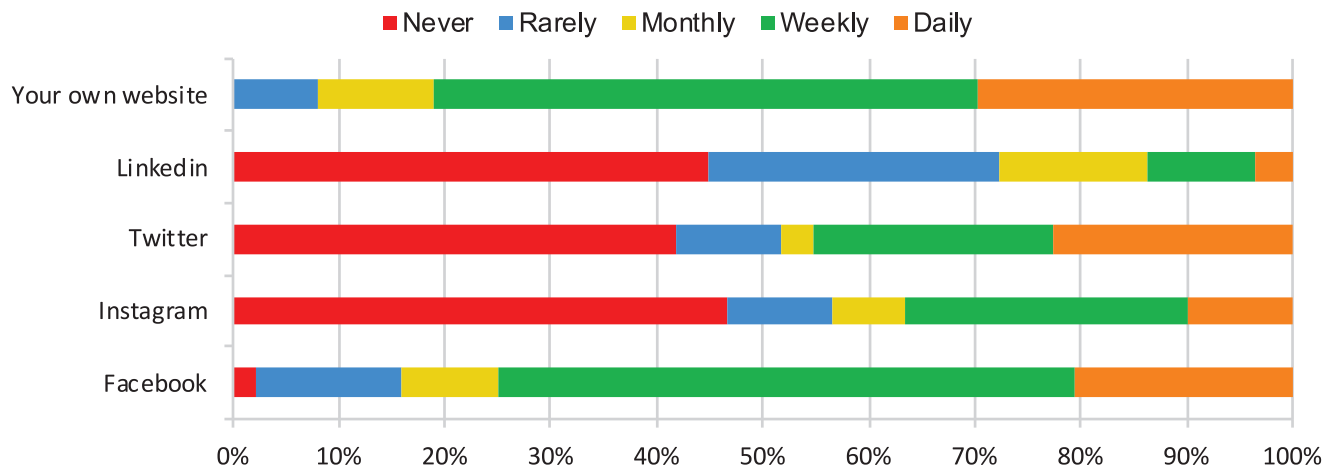
What percentage did digital product offerings represent to your total 2020 sales?



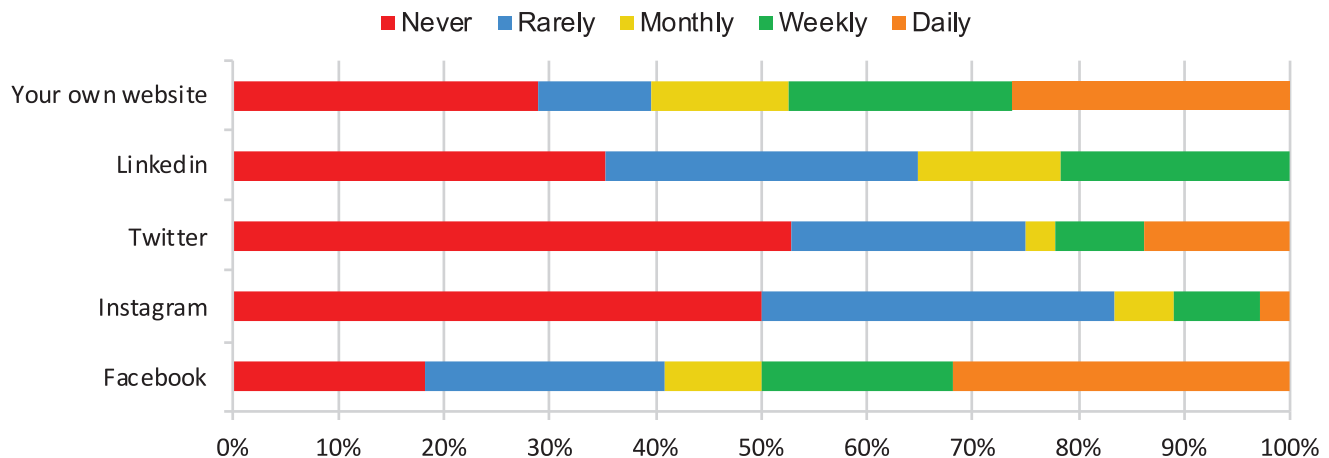
What percentage do digital product offerings represent to your 2021 sales budget?



How active are you in posting for your business on the following social media/digital platforms?



How active for personal use do you post or visit the following social media/digital platforms?



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Human-driven internet traffic accounts for only 62.8% of all web traffic!

Imperva 2020 Bad Bot Report

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www.mfcp.org

PNAWAN

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FloridamediaAssociation.org

WCP

Wisconsin Community Papers
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ON-LINE PUBLISHERS IS AHEAD OF THE CURVE

BY BARBARA HOLMES



Donna Anderson founded On-Line Publishers in 1995 with the launch of its flagship senior publication, 50 Plus Life. She had no experience in the publishing industry – she'd been at home raising children for 16 years – but she was ready to get back into the workforce. As a frequent volunteer with the local Office of Aging, she found that she really enjoyed working with the senior community. So with their encouragement and support from local advertisers, 50 Plus Life was born.

"I live in Lancaster County (Pa.) and that's where we started," said Anderson. "My mother lived in Cumberland County, which is 30 minutes from me. She kept saying, 'Oh, it's so nice that the people in your community have so many things to do.' And I said, 'Mom, you have all those things to do too – you just don't know it.' So that was what propelled adding a Cumberland County edition, to share with



my mother what was going on in her community."

Initially, 50 Plus Life had a page devoted to listing frequently called numbers. "Our advertisers kept asking us how they could get on that page," said Anderson. "We wouldn't allow them to because they were primarily 800 numbers for organizations such as the American Heart Association. But a light bulb went off and we realized that if they wanted to advertise, we should provide a new medium for their advertisement!"

And so the Resource Directories were born. Anderson worked with area agencies on aging and organizations such as United Way to originally

populate the county-specific directories, which are verified and updated every year.

On-Line Publishers grew steadily with its three-prong approach: a county-specific newspaper, a resource directory and an annual expo to introduce seniors to companies with senior-oriented products and services. "Each of the Offices on Aging wanted their own products," said Anderson. "They didn't want information combined for two counties, so we started adding one county edition at a time. Then we would add a resource directory and an expo and that's how we moved into the six counties that we're in today."

After several profitable years publishing the 75,000-circulation 50 Plus Life and its associated directories, a business broker contacted Anderson with an offer to purchase a women's publication. She considered the offer but declined.

"There was already a business publication in our market but it was mainly focused on male-dominated industries," said Anderson. "We did occasionally go back to thinking about it over the next several years." Business Woman, a glossy regional magazine, was ultimately launched in 2004 with a circulation of 15,000.

Anderson realized in 2006 that there was an urgent need for information specifically related to caregiving. "We provide resources and cover a lot of articles related to caregivers," she said. "I had friends who would call me and say, 'Hey, I think my mom has Alzheimer's,' or 'my dad fell and broke his hip...What do I do?' All of a sudden I was the resource for everything a parent might need. We realized there was a real need for this information because nobody plans to be a caregiver. You are just thrust into it." And so Caregiver Solutions magazine was born.

Anderson was ahead of the COVID curve as well. "About four years ago, we decided that we would make it possible for everyone to work remotely so nobody had to use a vacation day if it snowed or a child

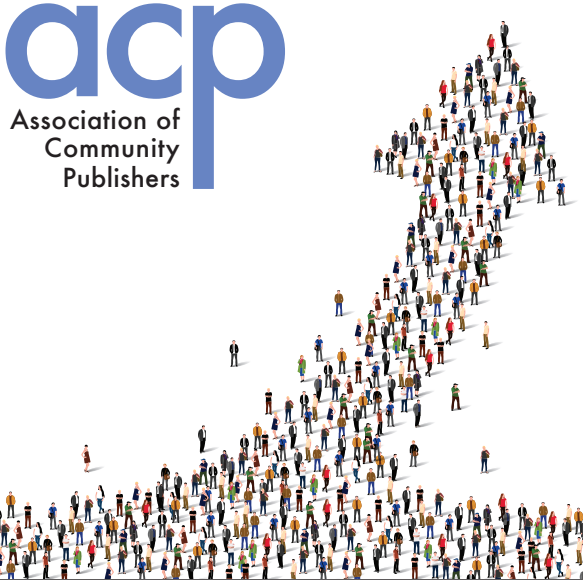
“ There are no changes planned for the print products, which survived the brutal 2020 pandemic without losing many advertisers. In-person expos are still being planned for 2021.

was sick," she said. "So when COVID hit in March 2020, we were fine. Everyone was able to start working from home immediately. After the first eight weeks, nobody wanted to go back to the office, so we became officially permanently remote as of February 1, 2021." Although the pandemic caused the layoff of three employees, the remaining nine have each been with the company for a minimum of 12 years.

In addition, Anderson had already looked into virtual opportunities prior to the pandemic because she was interested in hosting virtual job fairs in the winter months. "I really felt I was ahead of the game because I already had information, but the reality was all the platforms had a base cost of \$10,000 or more per event," she said. With 15 annual events, that was not feasible. "Fortunately, I had a person on staff who is extremely tech savvy so we were able to create a virtual product that we could live with."

There are no changes planned for the print products, which survived the brutal 2020 pandemic without losing many advertisers. In-person expos are still being planned for 2021. "Our readership and event attendees are very loyal to us. We'll continue to provide relevant content through our publications and are excited about getting together again throughout the region at our expos," said Anderson. ■

Together we can!



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**National Search For Association
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

The Association of Community Publishers (ACP) is a progressive non-profit dedicated to helping community publishers succeed and grow. The association recently merged the two leading national associations to become the largest organization advocating for community publishers in the United States. These associations have been the catalyst for industry prosperity for more than 50 years. The selected candidate will be a self-starter able to creatively complete projects on time and within budget. While working with an energetic board of directors who oversee and give guidance about successfully navigating the position, the Executive Director will operate as the chief executive officer of the organization.

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Application Deadline: March 10, 2021

To review a full copy of the job description, just scan the QR code to the right.

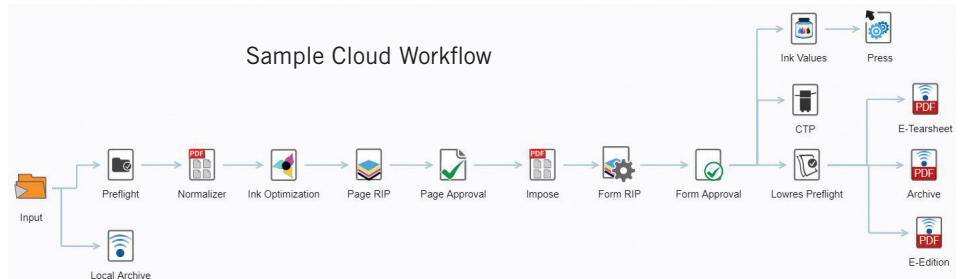


NEW PROIMAGE AMERICA

New ProImage America, an Agfa Company, is a leading developer of innovative browser-based digital and production automated workflows, ink optimization, image color toning & correction software and a press registration solution for commercial and newspaper printers. Our solutions, both local and cloud based help publishers automate workflow, streamline production and reduce overall costs.

Our latest workflow automation and output management software, **NewsWayX** is available as a local or cloud based system. The hosted solution provides custom workflows on Vendor provided cloud servers. Print sites have logons just as if the servers were local to softproof, approve, and track pages & plates. Plate ready Tiffs will automatically be sent to local CTP devices for output. ProImage will maintain the Servers, RIPs and Software so versions are always current eliminating costly upgrades and the need for software and hardware support contracts.

NewsWayX features a single, integrated user interface that keeps all users informed about editions and their status. It offers faster turnaround and increased productivity for cost savings in the production process. Because it is based on HTML5, NewsWayX can be fully accessed from any computer platform that supports a browser. With its new easy-to-use interface, the production staff does not require lengthy training sessions in order to learn the software. The Cloud offering includes Edition Planning, Ripping, Imposition, soft-proofing of post RIP pages & plates, Approvals, and Output Management to Local CTP's with load balancing and color locking. Additional options for Preflighting, Ink Presetting, Fan-out control among others can be added.



The platform provides highly sophisticated job tracking capabilities. The system displays the production status in a layered approach, from very general production views to the status of a single file or plate. This makes it easy for production to monitor multiple jobs running simultaneously.

Our Cloud-based **OnColor** software automatically color corrects and tones images for printing presses and online editions. Operators no longer have to manually touch each image in local programs like photoshop for optimal reproduction quality on press. With over 400 clients installed, editorial and prepress operators can upload images to a Cloud OnColor server that automatically color corrects, tones and can convert color images to grayscale and returns the adjusted jpeg images or PDF's back in minutes. This saves valuable time by processing images quickly reducing labor and provides professionally toned images back to the operator. A single image can be uploaded, and multiple images returned (i.e. color corrected, grayscale, web ready) saving even more time. Each Customer has a custom workflow using specific ICC profiles and settings for maximum quality for their press and digital environments. Every month OnColor processes over 40,000 images for Newspapers and publishers.

Its latest version provides improved Skin Tone handling which includes better USM sharpening and filtered

EXAMPLES:



Original



Processed without Skin Tone Correction



Processed with Skin Tone Correction

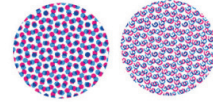
skin smoothing for both RGB and CMYK output. This feature protects skin tones from being over sharpened by applying Smoothing to certain areas.

Filtered Skin Tones Example – A filter, which automatically removes skin imperfections and smoothens the skin while preserving all detail that is important like hair, mouth, eyebrows, etc.



reproduction, we can print the entire range from 1-99% while maintaining a mathematically proven moiré free structure.

SPIR@L uses the same lpi and dpi as a conventional AM screen and draws a curve and groove to create the SPIR@L 'dots'.



Left: digital AM screen, right: digital SPIR@L screen.

The curve and groove applied will almost disappear in print providing a similar cleanness and rosette structure as AM.

SPIR@L in Practice

With a normal Lupe you may see the same structure and dot as a conventional AM screen in print, with the huge benefits of having a lower ink layer in the dots itself. This will improve printability and reduce ink-usage resulting in a sharper image. On top, a calibrated SPIR@L screen will reproduce the same colors in print without extra efforts! ■

Rick Shafranek
 Vice President Sales & Marketing
 New ProImage America, Inc.
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Our **Press Registration** system is able to adjust TIFF separations to correct for registration issues without having to touch or modify the press. With advances in technology and new algorithms that we developed it becomes possible to automatically resize, rotate, mirror and shift the Tiff separations at precise increments to more effectively compensate for press mis-registration and web growth. Press Register does just this and comes with a digital microscope to accurately measure the amount of scaling required for perfect registration.

Benefits:

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- Extend the press parts life span
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Lastly is a new RIP Screening Technology called **Spir@L**. Based on the fundamentals of our well known Sublima screening, SPIR@L is Agfa's latest patented screening technology. With a guaranteed minimal dot

**There are many ways to connect with your community...
 but only one way to connect with your industry!**



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THE MOST OVERUSED WORD IN ADVERTISING



BY JOHN FOUST
RALEIGH, NC

I can imagine this scene playing out hundreds of times every day. A salesperson sits in an advertiser's office and says, "Let's talk about your next ad campaign. What are your thoughts?" That's a sensible conversation starter. Ask an open-ended question, hear the other person's ideas and go from there.

Let's say the advertiser answers, "Quality. We've got to let people know we believe in quality." That sounds like a harmless comment, but it's an example of where bad ideas come from. If the salesperson does not probe for an explanation, "We believe in quality" will end up as theme of the advertising. And that ad campaign will get lost in a world of other vague advertising claims.

I believe that "quality" is the most overused word in advertising. It's everywhere.

Advertisers boast of quality products, quality customer service, quality people, quality selection, quality traditions and quality reputations. They act as though consumers automatically understand what they are talking about. But in reality, the word "quality" is trite and has little meaning in today's marketplace.

"Quality" is not the answer to a question. It's another question. It's your cue to dig for information. Pretend you're a lawyer on a search for evidence to prove your point. Find where your advertiser's unique quality comes from, and let *that* become the idea.

Generally speaking, there are two types of evidence that can be used in advertising: product proof and human proof. The right choice can define quality and make it come to life in the consumer's mind. Let's take a closer look:

1. PRODUCT PROOF. To find this kind of evidence, make a list of features and benefits. Then narrow it to the most rele-

vant information. Are there special ingredients? Is there a unique manufacturing procedure? What about guarantees? Is there a story of a customer who is still using the product after an impressive number of years – or miles – of service?

This approach presents the product as a hero. If you face a specific problem, don't you want the product that will save the day? When you want certain benefits, don't you want the product that is proven to deliver those benefits?

2. HUMAN PROOF. There are two ways to use human proof: (1) a testimonial from a happy customer or (2) a statement from someone who works for the advertiser.

When an advertiser says, "We're really good," that's just another marketer bragging about themselves. But it means something

when a real live customer says, "They're really good, and here's why." That's the power of a customer testimonial.

A statement from someone representing the advertiser is what I call an in-house testimonial. For example, it's the technician who tells you that – when you buy a car from his dealership – you can count on his 24 years of experience to keep your car in tip-top condition. Or it's the chef who tells you she would be honored to prepare a meal for your special event.

Proof can make "quality" statements come to life. ■

“The word “quality” is trite and has little meaning in today’s marketplace.

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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

The Leadership Institute is a structured, industry specific sales and management training program sponsored by the Association of Community Publishers.



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AWARDED

132
CERTIFIED ADVERTISING
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AWARDED BY ACP

103
DIFFERENT CLASS
CURRICULUMS PRESENTED

BLOOM!

BY JIM BUSCH

“Bloom where you’re planted!”
—American folk wisdom

I heard “Bloom where you’re planted” a lot when I was growing up. Anytime I complained about my life, my grandmother would roll out this old proverb. She had an impoverished childhood in a rough and tumble coal mining town, had lived through the Spanish flu, the depression and WWII. Despite all her troubles, she never gave up and always enjoyed life. Looking back at my life, this is perhaps the best advice I ever received. We can’t always change the situation we find ourselves in, but we can always make the best of where we find ourselves. The lesson here is plain, my grandmother wasn’t telling me to endure; she was telling me to “bloom,” to thrive. This proverb doesn’t tell us to “make the best out of a bad situation,” it tells us to “make a bad situation great!”

Right now we find ourselves “planted” in the middle of a global pandemic. This is the biggest challenge that advertising sales people have ever faced. The recession of a few years ago pales by comparison to the disruption created by Covid 19; many of our customers have been forced to temporarily shut down and many have closed up for good. This challenges us to work harder and smarter than ever before to help them come up with unique marketing solutions to get through this. We need to be at the top of our game to convince them to promote curbside options and come up with ways to keep their old customers and gain new ones. Just when we need to be at our best, the virus has kept us from taking the training we need to stay sharp. For the first time in decades, our national conferences had to be canceled, taking away the best opportunity for sales people to learn their craft when they need it the most. Our industry has a grand tradition of “blooming where we’re planted,” so our leadership has come up with an elegant solution to this problem. To provide world class training when and where it is most needed, they created opportunities to study online. More than just a “work around,” virtual lessons allows our people to access training without the expense of travel or taking them out of the field when they need to spend every minute talking to clients. Despite where they’ve been planted, virtual training allows our people to “bloom!” ■

THE REAL WORLD OF ADVERTISING SALES— beyond the first meeting magic words strategy



BY BOB BERTING,
BERTING
COMMUNICATIONS

Let's take the first prospect meeting. This is not the time to high pressure a prospect. Recently we see a strategy to present options and recommendations in the first sales meeting. After a barrage of asking clever questions, presenting ideas on the spot, talking about the Corona Virus, developing the proposal, giving a variety of pricing options, giving testimonials, overcoming objections, attempting to close the prospect ...**all these barrage of actions are on the first meeting.**

Obviously not the way to sell the prospect on the first call. This approach could not only irritate the prospect but put the advertising salesperson making the presentation look very pushy and not an advertising sales professional and a trusted advisor.

Introducing the first call of a 3 call process-establishing credibility.

Instead of doing everything on the first call, let's look at a more reasonable process to sell the prospect. Let's begin by examining a good first call on the prospect. According to most experts, after you have researched their website, now is the time to tell them what you know about their business—and how interested you are in what they are trying to achieve. This usually leads to questions you can ask about their business goals. The whole thrust of effort is designed to get them to open up and reveal everything about their business and their marketing goals plus hopefully their budget for advertising.

As a media buyer for my advertising agency of 30 years, I have been subjected to this approach. In a typical example, I'm sitting there

with a media salesperson and I'm thinking "who is this person--can I trust them—why should I tell them all about my plans—if I've got goals I want to achieve why should I reveal them when I hardly know him or her?" The bottom line is that they have no credibility with me...I'm not ready to open up until I can thoroughly trust them, think they're reliable, and have confidence in them.

IDENTIFICATION

So the answer is, you've got to strike a balance between building a relationship and at the same time have them trust and believe you. Here is a time tested strategy for identifying yourself to the prospect:

The advertising salesperson opens with the following " I'd like to talk to you about your business but I think it's very important that you know more about who we are" The prospect now has these questions and thoughts in their mind which needs to be addressed as to who you are:

I don't know who you are—what is your background experience –what are your qualifications?

I don't know your company—what is the complete name of your publication—what other businesses do you have?

I don't know your company's product—tell me about your print and digital display ads—website—local news

I don't know your company's customers—give me testimonials of people in my line of business.

Once this information is presented- the prospect now is in a position to better trust and to believe in your credibility. You'll notice there has been no mention of showing a media kit. It has all been verbal.

SALES TIPS

BUILDING RAPPORT

There's always a likeability factor in selling. It's amazing what a smile can do to break down barriers between people. It's always important to find common ground and build rapport. How many times have we heard the phrase "build rapport" but even in today's world of selling it's amazing how many times we forget to do it. It still means something for a prospect to be complimented on their hobby or something they've done.

CREATION OF INTEREST

At the conclusion of the first call — that is the time to do what I call "gravitational selling" This is where you want the prospect to gravitate to you in preparation for the second call. It also can be called "creation of interest". Now you tell the prospect that on the next visit, you want to learn more about their business and show them how you will create great custom designed ads for them in print and digital as well as formulating an advertising plan that will reach their target audience more effectively. Then you ask for permission to have a second visit.

THE SECOND CALL

Fact finding approach—do rough layout sketches incorporating the big idea—analyze why rough layouts are done—how to build their image—ask about their budget—ask permission to bring advertising plan and comprehensive layouts to third meeting.

THE THIRD CALL

Presenting the comprehensive layout ideas—Presenting the advertising plan—Covering objections—Closing techniques—Power closing sentences

RETENTION—WHO IS GOING TO SERVICE THE ACCOUNT?

Hopefully the prospect is now the customer of the publication. Some-

one has to service the new account. I wonder who could that person be? Why it's the person who sold the account of course. All of the ad sales training experts who promote selling everything on the first call never talk about what happens after the prospect becomes a customer. Someone who knows the account quite well has to be a marketing partner with the new customer by preparing the ads, presenting more publication services like inserts, special promotions, etc. The customer expects this situation to happen the way I have described it.

High customer retention starts with the first contact with a prospect and

““ There's always a likeability factor in selling. It's amazing what a smile can do to break down barriers between people. It's always important to find common ground and build rapport.

continues throughout the lifetime of a relationship and successful retention effort takes this entire lifestyle into account. A publication's ability to attract and retain new customers is related not only to its product and services, but also the way it services its existing customers. This service generates a reputation that creates a powerful image within and across the marketplace. Customer retention also has a direct impact on profitability.

TRUST AND BELIEVABILITY

The bedrock of customer retention is also based on these factors:

- The image and reputation of the publication. How does it fit in the media mix of the customer? What is the strength of their readership?
- The trust and believability of the salesperson.
- The plan of action for the customer will include the following promises:
 1. I will design a compelling advertising campaign using my publication to present your products

and services in the most creative way possible.

2. I will work with you as your marketing partner to fine tune your ad campaign and adjust it to changing market conditions.
3. I will treat your advertising dollars as if they were mine, giving you the best discounts available to control your costs.
4. I will keep you up to date with what is going on in the market from my communication with other business owners.

THE FINAL WORD ON CUSTOMER RETENTION.

The number one place publications can get revenue is through retention. They need to stop being so product oriented and work on establishing an effective strategy for their customers. That strategy will include a marketing plan which will commit the customers to a long range advertising program with the publication. ■

Bob is the author of four best-selling e-books for the newspaper industry: "Dynamic Sales and Image Power", "Advanced Selling Skills For The Advertising Sales Pro", "Power Selling Tools For The Advertising Sales Consultant", and his newest e-book, "Smart Customer Connections For Advertising Salespeople. You can order Bob's books on his website: www.bobberting.com. Read Bob's books and discover how his vast experience and know-how can help you achieve much more business for you and your publication. You'll greatly benefit from the wisdom of one of America's top advertising sales experts. Bob is a professional speaker, advertising sales trainer, publisher, marketing consultant, and leading columnist in many national and regional newspaper trade association publications. He is the president of Berting Communications and can be reached at bob@bobberting.com or 317-849-5408.

Graphic Hooks

By Ellen Hanrahan

My articles for IFPA members ...

began in 1993 (although there was a brief “gap” year in ‘94, but I resumed in 1995) and have been contributing ever since. I started doing page layout with **QuarkXPress** and switched to **Adobe InDesign** in mid-June of 2004. (The reason was a “time crunch” and the 47-digit activation code I needed to reinstall XPress—but don’t get me started!)

My one request for the article was that I had a full page and control over that page. Trust me, I did an article for a publication and they reset the text, which made it hard to see that I was actually pointing out differences between serif and sans serif typefaces!

That also means I’m responsible for typos, widows, orphans and other typographic misdemeanors...forgive me beforehand.

Here is what I plan to cover this year...

Orbiting the Giant Hairball

“*Orbiting the Giant Hairball*”^{*} was a book I read in the early 2000s. The author, Gordon MacKenzie, was in the creative department at Hallmark Cards for thirty years. His take on advertising was a little different than mine, but nonetheless, his wisdom seems appropriate and tackles some of the same issues that are of concern to me when I am working on visual information.

I am a creative, or at least am supposed to be—some days not so sure! My job function, back in the day, was to create advertising—to produce, and/or interpret the thoughts or ideas of the advertiser and develop a visual message to sell their products or services.

Yep, I hear you, it wasn’t always easy. The sales staff would sell the space, I and other graphic designers, would produce, create, make happen, whatever... all the info that was given to us.

We started with the advertising space and as information, directions, suggestions and requests were added to fill the space, we started to get a giant hairball.



Now granted, selling blank space is just plain silly, but the more “stuff” that was added, the more we had to control the info in that space and at times, that was a pretty daunting task!

Creating Effective Advertising

This was a challenging career for me, because through the years technology had changed the tools of my job—a lot!

I started in the layout department, when there were multiple people involved in the process... before “Desktop.” Once layout was finished, the ad went to typesetting, then on to paste-up and finally to the camera. I was there for the desktop “evolution,” and the tools of my trade became technological wonders—and the challenge to do more... and now I could do it all by myself! Ugh!

But the basic elements and principles that were the building blocks that I used to create the advertising remained the same.

Over the years, I’ve seen a lot of ads when I helped judge the Wisconsin Community Newspapers Awards Competition. It always bothered me a bit when I saw a good ad, but there was something they could have done to make it even better—and not be able to tell them why—it fell into the **Good Concept—Needs A Little Work** Category.

However, the good news is that there is no one best way to design an ad, but there are common traits that help to avoid readability and legibility issues, including:

- **Text that runs too close to the ad border** causes a distraction in smooth eye flow in reading the copy. Hint, the fatter or more elaborate the border, the more space you need between the border and the copy.

- **Use color as an attention getter.** If the entire ad seems engulfed in color, or even worse color gradients (especially on newsprint!), the less impact the color has. Use the color sparingly and use it to call attention to the most important information in the ad. I understand that the customer pays for the color and wants his money’s worth, but explain that too much of a good thing dilutes the impact they are going for.

- **Be picky about typefaces.** Learn all that you can about type. Most advertising that I see can be made better by just adjusting the type or choosing a more appropriate typeface for the message.

Limit the amount of typefaces in the ad and be consistent in size. Type that changes in size or weight from line to line is distracting and unity in the ad is also compromised.



“Graphic Hooks”

The typeface I chose for the page heading is called **Candy Script** from Sudtipos Type Foundry (designed by Alejandro Paul). I was looking for a type that gave a subtle nod to a “hook,” and this seemed right. Two things I like 1) glyphs and dingbats and 2) vector graphics (because there are so many parts I can use—and vectors don’t degrade with size changes, unlike bitmap). Here are some other glyphs to choose in **Candy Script**...

Graphic Hooks
Graphic Hooks
Graphic Hooks

I have altered the word spacing depending on the glyph I had chosen. Caution—it’s easy to overdo, so use restraint.

Final Thoughts

***Orbiting the Giant Hairball A Corporate Fool’s Guide to Surviving with Grace;** author Gordon MacKenzie and published by Viking Penguin is more of a way to navigate the rules in a structured company while maintaining your creative aspirations.

However, I liken it more to the restrictions we may encounter when tasked with creating effective advertising for the customer.

That’s where my skills, understanding and experience come in to play. The “hairball” may never go away, but I have the ability to sort through, refine, unify and present a message that is clear, readable and legible.

I may be new to some of you, others not so much. Anyway, if any of you need more info, clarification or information just e-mail to the address below with “Graphic Hooks” in the subject line. Also, if you have any ideas, concerns or requests, do the same as stated in the preceding sentence.

Stay Safe...
until next time

Ellen Hanrahan hanrahan.ln@att.net ©2021

ON THE HORIZON

2021

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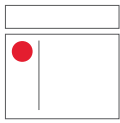
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