
INFORMER

June 2021

**Community
Papers of
Michigan**





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

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



Local Papers and Grocery Stores Face Common Problems

America's largest internet-based retailer, Amazon.com., continues to bite into the already meager profits of local grocery stores with additional distribution centers and a growing list of low-priced private label products.

The added warehouses are another step by Amazon to hijack the customer base of local brick-and-mortar stores in large and small communities. The move is affecting ma-and-pa operations and major chains.

Many smaller grocery stores, key advertisers in most community newspapers, will have to reinvent themselves to maintain their local customer base.

According to a University of Minnesota study, almost two-thirds of our nation's rural grocery stores will close in the next 10 years. In most cases there will never be a new store to replace it.

COMMUNITY ANCHORS

The economic conditions affecting smaller grocery stores are the same ones affecting other hometown businesses including newspapers. The local grocery store and the hometown newspaper are part of the backbone of every Main Street. Both,

along with a local bank, local health center and community school are necessary to create a complete local community.

The greatest problem effecting the rural grocery store as well as the hometown paper is lack of interest by younger generations in owning or managing a small community business. The grocery business is hard work. Most hometown grocers are expected to be open long hours seven days a week. It is a business that requires the owner to be an expert in multiple areas. There are few individuals of today's generation interested in working that hard.

And the same can be said about the newspaper business. Owning and producing a good newspaper requires countless hours attending meetings, taking pictures, selling ads, writing news stories, editing outside material, laying out the paper, managing postal reports, hiring employees and finally overseeing the paper's delivery.

Yet both businesses offer great satisfaction. Grocery stores are necessary for the flavor and health of the community. They are a gathering point in any community. Their customer base reaches far beyond

local homemakers to include local restaurants, nursing homes, schools and day-care centers.

The community newspaper, meanwhile, is more than just a billboard of weekly happenings. It is the first writer of local history, the creator of community consensus, the booster of school organizations and public enterprise and the watchdog of local government. It is unfortunate that many schools of journalism have turned their back on teaching print journalism and instead preach the future of public relations and digital blogging for financial success and personal satisfaction.

COMPETITION

More than 90 percent of rural grocers report their most troubling challenges are competition with large grocery chains, high operating costs and narrow profit margins.

This, too, is true of the publishing business. The world's demand for instant information, the many social media companies providing citizen journalism and the declining number of businesses to buy advertising are all curtailing the hometown paper. (Continued on page 3.)

Local Papers and Grocery Stores, Common Problems...

by Peter Wagner Continued from page 2

Yet, while many praise bloggers and independent websites for their quick delivery of the news, only the local paper have the staff, information resources and credibility to present a balanced a local story in one clear-cut, easy to understand package. Once again, the printed report is the only one that can be easily filed and retrieved when needed. Most important, the story can be as simple as Johnny's winning hit at last week's baseball game or as involved as the city's plan to build a new multimillion-dollar water system.

BUILDINGS

One final reason the University of Minnesota says local grocers are thinking of calling it quits is the condition of their buildings.

Many grocery stores are housed in structures over 50 years old. They are expensive to keep up, heat, air-condition, light and offer limited opportunities to create higher profit departments. Putting up a new, modern facility in their limited market is simply out of the question.

Many newspapers also are located in older structures designed for the days of hot type. They are appreciated for their easy-to-find, longtime location but otherwise out of date.

FUTURE

So, what can newspapers do to expand their financial base in a changing future? Twitter instantly reports the news of a two-car collision in town. CNN can instantly report that a plane crashed while flying from Paris to Egypt. But neither have the heartwarming, refrigerator posting of stories in the local paper.

America's hometowns need their newspapers to create consensus and build awareness. To continue to do so it may be necessary for publishers to expand their services for additional income.

1. These could include opening an in-house digital printing operation with modern short-run digital presses. Digital printing is quick, interfaces with existing design platforms and can be custom addressed as it is printed.

2. Offer web design and social media content services. Most businesses feel they need to be on Facebook and Twitter but don't know what to post to create daily customer interest and response.

3. Provide a retail service not otherwise available in your community. This might be a coffee

bar, (a great opportunity to overhearing story ideas), small office supply store, paperback bookstore or a local product gift store.

4. Create an in-house advertising agency to serve local banks, multi-location retailers, manufacturers, and public service organizations. Newspapers already have quality writers and designers to produce print, radio and social media campaigns and you can outsource desired television commercials.

5. Become a local online only broadcast station with occasional podcasts by local experts on food, family relations, the public schools, agriculture, gardening and whatever else is of interest to the community.

6. Produce local community events such as bridal shows, job fairs, summer theater in the park and color runs. Along with new advertising opportunities charge for participation, booth space and sponsorships. Some papers even get a cut of the food and beverage sales.

The future is changing but it is not bleak. The community paper has a strong future, but it will take vision and imagination to continue to be the king of the hill.

Peter W. Wagner is founder and publisher of the award-winning N'West Iowa REVIEW and 13 additional publications. He often is called Newspaper's Idea Man. You may contact him regarding his programs "100 Ideas for Fun and Profit" and "Seven Steps to Selling Success" by e-mailing pww@iowainformation.com or calling his cell 712-348-3550.



By **John Foust**
Raleigh, NC

Ad-Libs

What Makes a Good Headline?

Imagine the editors of a prestigious news organization sitting around a conference table discussing a breaking story. The story is written and all they need is a headline to convey its importance to readers. Someone says, "I've got it. Let's use one word: 'Look.' We can give it more impact by making the two o's look like eyeballs." Everyone nods in agreement, and the headline runs.

Sounds ridiculous, doesn't it? But something similar must be happening in advertising conversations, because 'Look' has been a popular headline for years.

Popularity doesn't equal effectiveness. Even though it's frequently used, "Look" is one of the worst headlines you'll ever see. It's a product of lazy writing. It communicates nothing of value to readers.

The headline deserves more respect than that, because it is the most important part of an ad. Research shows that four out of five readers do not get further than the headline. Unfortunately, this means that only 20 percent of the people who read an ad headline will read any of the body copy.

In other words, headlines have a lot of weight to carry. Pick up any newspaper – or go to any online news site – and you'll find article headlines that reveal the subjects of those articles. As a result, you can make split second decisions on whether or not to read more.

Doesn't it make sense that the same should apply to advertising headlines?



**Integrated Smart
Technology for
Your Convenience,
Comfort & Enjoyment**

Learn more today!
Visit us online, or call to arrange your free in-home consultation.

Seamlessly automate, optimize and coordinate temperature, sound, security, entertainment and more with our integrated technology systems for your home. We handle every phase, from design to installation and maintenance, to ensure quality control and your complete satisfaction.

Inta-Tech Home Systems
1234 Washington Street
Somerville Heights
000.000.0000
www.namewebsite.com

The next time you write an ad headline, ask yourself three questions:

1. Does the headline tell readers what the ad is about? If your ad is selling banking services, say so in the headline. If you are selling kitchen remodeling, say so. If you are promoting furniture, say so.

We read at a glance. If readers can't determine quickly what an ad is about, they'll skip it completely.

2. Does the headline promise a benefit? There are several types of headlines: (1) those that promise a benefit, (2) those that provide news, and (3) those that surprise readers or arouse curiosity.

While each type is capable of winning

readership and selling products, benefit headlines have been shown to be the most reliable choice. Just about every buying decision we make is driven by real or perceived benefits. That's why it's a good idea to create benefits-oriented advertising – and then put the major benefit front and center in the headline.

3. Is the language believable? Without believable language, our first two questions are not worth answering. Consider a hardware store ad which is headlined, "Fantastic savings on the world's best lawnmowers." To answer our first two questions, the ad is about lawnmowers and the benefit is that customers can save money. But the puffery kills the message.

Copywriters should avoid exaggerations and unsubstantiated claims in advertising. No one believes sweeping boasts like "fantastic," or "superior" or "best ever."

The right answers to these three questions can put your next ad in the top 20 percent. And you'll increase your chances of creating an ad that is worth a "look."

(c) Copyright 2021 by John Foust. All rights reserved.

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



Michael Angelo Caruso

A CEO named Aaron called to discuss having me do a training session for his sales team. He wanted his charges, especially the young sellers, to learn how to better relate to customers and prospects.

Aaron told me that his sellers tended to cave on price whenever prospects complained about a lack of financial resources. He said that if his salespeople were in a slump or wanting to prop up their numbers, they would often bend rules and relax on terms designed to protect the integrity of the company. His point was that feeling sorry for a customer might seem like the right thing to do under certain conditions, but more often than not, sympathy didn't work out for anyone. "When it comes to running a business," Aaron said, "Sympathy costs money." We talked a bit more and Aaron decided to hire me. As I prepped the program content, I began to consider alternatives to sympathy. If feeling sorry for a prospect "didn't work out," what emotion would serve everyone better in a salesperson-customer relationship?

What could be better than sympathy?

Hallmark and other greeting card companies have been marketing "sympathy cards" forever. Sympathy is

Sympathy costs when selling; Try empathy instead



a common courtesy in our culture. It's rather easy to deliver sympathetic sentiments in phrases such as "I'm sorry for your loss" and "You must feel terrible right now." And because sympathy is easy, it's often a default emotion even when the situation calls for something more sophisticated--such as [empathy](#).

When you sympathize with someone, you have feelings of pity and sorrow. When you have empathy, you have the bandwidth for those feelings and so much more. Put another way, sympathy is feeling for someone else. Empathy allows you to feel with someone else.

While reflexive sympathetic exchanges dissipate fairly quickly, empathy is deeply rooted in affinity and trust. More importantly, empathy has "room to grow" through valuable introspective dialog, meaningful exchanges and better understanding.

Empathy is a neurological function. It

processes what the other person is going through and then activates similar neural responses in your own brain. This mutual involvement allows for a more vivid and beneficial experience for both parties.

Why isn't empathy more common?

Most humans don't default to empathy because it doesn't always feel good. Deep, sophisticated emotions can be difficult to navigate. Also, research shows that it's easier to empathize with people you identify with emotionally or physically. This makes it hard to be empathic with strangers or new business connections. And empathy is time-consuming. The best relationships feature lots of quality time. Make no mistake, it takes time to cultivate empathy. Here are a few tips to level up your empathy skills: 1. Go slow. Empathy doesn't occur as much as it evolves. 2. Ask open-ended questions, then shut up and listen. 3. Recognize empathy's limits. (Continued on page 9.)



Ryan Dohrn

President/Founder,
Brain Swell Media LLC

Selling New Digital Marketing Options With Success

8 ideas to boost your chances of getting a signed advertiser contract

Around every corner is a new digital media marketing option. OTT, audio/podcasting, CCT, video, and more. These new marketing technology (MarTech) ideas are awesome, but as salespeople, we often have new marketing solutions dropped on us and we are expected to work our “sales magic.” Sure, there is a dream out there that we as sales pros would be involved in the total process of new media launches. But, let’s just live with the reality that leadership normally does not involve us in the origination of new marketing tools. It’s ok. To all the leaders out there, we recognize this as a fact and would love to be involved from the beginning. To my fellow media sales warriors, perhaps if we were not so negative about new ideas, we would be asked to be involved from day one. Just a thought.

So, you have been dealt a new media option like video or podcasting, how do we sell it quickly and effectively? I encourage you to consider these eight ideas for selling new media marketing options with success.

1. Sell with visuals. Bradford Research tells us that 65% of people are visual learners. Yet, I observe that most media reps are phone- or auditory-based sellers. Meaning, we talk to tell. We do not show

to tell. If COVID brought us anything good, it is the fact that almost everyone can participate in a Zoom meeting. Selling new technology requires visuals or, you are connecting with less than 35% of people in an optimal way.

2. Stop designing sales tools for eighth-graders. It has been a common practice to design sales tools in such a simple way that even an eighth-grader can understand them. Have you met today’s middle school students? They can out tech most adults. When selling new marketing ideas like video or audio, take the idea and create sales tools to explain to your Mom. Love you, Mom. I truly mean this. Try to remove as much tech lingo as you can from the explanation and focus on the value that the new marketing options bring to the advertiser. Podcasting is great for thought leadership or education. Video is great for showcasing customer testimonials to drive new business. Video is also a great way to aid in social media advertising impact. Facebook tells us that video posts are viewed 30 times more than non-video posts. Never forget, in media sales, price is what an advertiser pays. The value is the benefit they receive from you. So, everything should be focused on value and/or benefit.

3. As a sales strategy, try playing the “I have a new idea” game with your advertisers. This is a fun game that I use to sell new marketing ideas. The email looks something like this ... “Hi, Bonnie. I have a new idea that I think you will really like. Could I have five minutes to share? I would like to share this with you first before

offering it to others. Would Tuesday or Wednesday after 2 p.m. work for a quick chat?” Do NOT explain the option in an email. Do NOT attach a sales sheet. Do NOT try and explain the new MarTech over the phone.

4. I love to sell new MarTech ideas based on F.O.M.O. The fear of missing out (FOMO) is real. Most people do not like to be left out when things are new. I will drive this fear home with an email that looks something like this ... “Hi, Bill. I have an idea that would be perfect for you. Before sharing this idea with Jane Doe Realtor, Bob Doe Insurance, or Rex Reed Jewelers, I want to share it with you first. If you are not interested, let me know and I will move on to Jane. Thanks so much.” While we must be ethical in all we do in sales, we can also be point-blank, and this technique has sold a lot for me over the years. Just to be clear, though, you cannot use this technique more than once in most cases.

5. Sell based on perceived exclusivity. The word “perceived” is important here. I am not offering exclusivity, but I am positioning my sales pitch as a near-exclusive offer. The email might look something like, “Hi, Julie. I have a new idea and we truly only have room for two companies to be involved. I feel like your company would deeply benefit from this idea and I thought of you first. What about a quick chat after lunch today?” Clearly, an exclusive offer would be best—but that is limiting in our business. However, the illusion of near exclusivity can be an extremely powerful sales tool. (Continued on page 7.)

Selling New Digital Marketing Options With Success

by Ryan Dohrn Continued from page 6

6. Play the “Could I get your advice?” game. This is similar to the “I have an idea” game. The email looks something like ... “Hi, Jill. We are launching a new marketing idea and I would really like to get your advice on how we can best present it to business owners like you. Could I drop by tomorrow after 3 p.m. for a quick chat?” Advertisers love to offer advice. This is a great idea when you want to get buy-in on new marketing options. Or, on marketing options that are not selling. This is not a bait-and-switch scenario, though. I like to approach this conversation with a very open mind. Then, I can give feedback to my leadership as well. This is an even better idea to deploy before you set pricing or invest too much in the launch of a new marketing option.

7. Go into every meeting with ideas and examples ready to go. I have been in the media sales and marketing business since 1991. Every successful sales rep I have ever worked with has never said to an advertiser, “What would you like to do with my media channel?” Instead, they have always shared ideas of how the advertiser can use the media option, idea, or channel to its fullest. Asking an advertiser to paint their own picture of potential is foolish.

Lead them. Guide them. Help them be successful. You are a media sales advisor. So, meet in advance with your team to uncover ideas that you can present with the new media option.

8. Get your client success path squared away before you pitch a new media product. There is nothing worse than selling a new marketing option, getting the advertiser excited, and then seeing the support team or client success team drop the ball. I have seen this happen over and over in my career. So much so, that when I worked as a Group Publisher, I once refused to sell a digital marketing idea until the client success team could prove that they were ready to roll it out and truly offer white-glove service to my clients.

Fellow media sales warriors out there, in the end, it is not so much about selling a new shiny object as it is about working hard to grow your relationship with your advertisers. “Mr. or Mrs. Advertiser, my goal is simple, to be a valuable extension of your team and help your business succeed.”

Never forget, if ad sales was an easy job, everyone would be doing it. And they are

not. Maybe we’re all a bit crazy, but we have found careers that will feed our families for a lifetime!

Listen to Ryan’s ad sales podcast, Ad Sales Nation, on iTunes or on Soundcloud. Keep up to date with Ryan’s ad sales training advice on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/brainswell/>

Ryan Dohrn is an award winning ad sales training coach, a nationally recognized internet sales consultant, and an international motivational speaker. He is the author of the best-selling ad sales book, *Selling Backwards*. Ryan is the President and founder of Brain Swell Media and 360 Ad Sales Training, a boutique ad sales training and sales coaching firm with a detailed focus on ad sales training, internet consulting, and media revenue generation. Ryan is also the Publisher of Sales Training World.

Contact information:

Ryan R. Dohrn
President/Founder
360 Ad Sales Training and Strategy
Brain Swell Media LLC
Ryan@BrainSwellMedia.com



Learn how to profit from
selling websites to your
advertisers at
SiteSwan.com



By Bob Berting
Berting Communications

Developing A More Creative Attitude With Customers

Goal setting is a personal thing that is aimed at harnessing power and directing it toward the things in life we want to achieve. Advertising salespeople need to have a consistent goal that incorporates the development of a creative attitude toward their customers and very specifically how to develop the customer's image in the marketplace.

Let's start with ad design

Although there is much to be said for instant recognition of ad design incorporating a unique border, boxes, reverses, spot color, etc, eventually the content of the ad wins out. By that, we mean the headline of the ad will convey benefits and reinforce the image of the customer. Many advertising experts have felt the headline is 80% of the ad's effectiveness. Then well written copy will continue to hold the attention of the reader throughout the rest of the ad and also continue to build the image of the customer.

Photographs, Cartoons, and Caricatures Consider the use of photographs (which represent reality), cartoons, and caricatures. A sophisticated piano and

organ dealer once achieved a tremendous increase in sales due to an animal cartoon series. Each ad in the campaign had a large dominant, provocative heading and a large cartoon animal illustration. After a few ads, the image of the business changed dramatically, and readers no longer thought of his showroom as a cold, stuffy, indifferent place. Customers commented on how clever his ads were and felt more at home shopping for high priced pianos and organs. Of course, the salespeople had to be aware of the advertising image they were projecting and conduct themselves accordingly.

Make the advertising geared to contemporary lifestyles

In every campaign, there must be an effort to make the advertising as contemporary as possible, tuning in to the lifestyles of young married couples who are establishing early buying habits. Many times, a store interior image does not tie in with the advertising image. This is where counseling with the advertiser can be effective, whereby suggestions can be made to introduce colorful murals and creative point of sale pieces to give the store a more contemporary look. Maybe the walls need a new color also. This type of counseling is only possible if the customer perceives the salesperson as a trusted consultant who has his or her best interest at heart

Why should a customer be concerned about their image?

They should, because the flow of customer traffic depends on it. People form opinions about a business from observing their advertising, displays, merchandising practices, and location. They also consider pricing, quality, convenience, service, dependability, and selection. All of these factors add up to the image of the business.

Media competition--advertising is war Don't assume anything in regard to media competition. Your customer many times could be one of their hot prospects. You must know the advantages and disadvantages of your media competition backwards and forwards. You must develop strategy and execution that will enhance your relationship and build stronger bridges with your customers. Advertising is war. Victory in media warfare belongs to the creative advertising salesperson who can write good campaigns, develop more meaningful relationships, worry about customer image, and consistently study and be aware of competing media.

Bob Berting's new e-book #4 for advertising salespeople

Bob is the author of 4 best-selling e-books for the newspaper industry Bob's newest e-book "Smart Customer Connections For Advertising Salespeople" is a publication that is very relative and helpful for print media salespeople dealing with their customers in today's CoronaVirus atmosphere. You can order any of Bob's books on his website: www.bobberting.com.

Read Bob's e-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.

Sympathy costs when selling; Try empathy instead

by Michael Angelo Caruso Continued from page 5

This deeper emotional commitment is more about "being there" for the person than actively solving a problem. Empathy doesn't have to involve taking sides or even making a commitment. So this is why Hallmark markets "sympathy" cards and not "empathy" cards. The former is easy etiquette and the latter is a psychological investment in experiential learning. It's hard to get the latter into an envelope.

Empathy on the job

So how can salespeople shift from the sympathy frame to an empathic script? It's important to remember that empathy is a non-transactional process that should precede business strategies. In other words, first be a real person and then be a salesperson. In the sympathy frame, for example, you might feel sorry for a prospect who's having a cash flow problem. If you believe price to be the only thing keeping you from closing the sale, you might offer a discount. Do this often enough and you will have cash flow problems. Price concessions, of course, reduce commissions for the seller and profit margins for the company. There are dozens of ways to handle price objections that don't involve a price discount. Only agree to a price

concession as an infrequent and last resort. Before exercising your final strategy, make time for empathy to play out.

Pro tip: Don't just feel someone's pain; try to better understand it. Understanding is the basis of communication, which can lead to actual problem-solving and higher ground for both parties. Listen for a few minutes, then say things like, "I hear what you're saying" and "It sounds like you've given this some thought." Ask questions that help you gain a better understanding of what the prospect is going through. Begin with binary questions so you can gauge the comfort level of a deeper inquiry:

- Are you okay? Is your business okay? Is your team okay?
- What do you think is going on?
- How are you feeling about this?
- What will it take to resolve things?
- What can I do to help?

Offering help is not the same as a promise to help. Remember: Empathy first, problem-solving second. Empathy will help you develop stronger relationships with prospects, customers and team members, as well. And when others begin to benefit

from sharing feelings with you, they are likely to be more empathic -- even with you.

Remember that on-the-job empathy has its boundaries. Consult with your Human Resources department to avoid crossing the line between professional and personal exchanges.

Empathy, then, brings about better relationships, which can lead to more sales. But always exercise your empathy muscles for the people, not the profit.

Indeed, when it comes to selling, sympathy costs you sales, but empathy can help you make quota and beyond.

Want to help your sales team get better with empathy?

Michael does sales coaching to help salespeople be their best. Contact Michael to arrange a complimentary consult to discuss what's possible. Meanwhile, you're welcome to re-purpose this article in your newsletter, blog or website. Simply send Michael a message stating your intent and be sure to provide attribution. Share your link and Michael's team will even drive traffic for you.



Reasons to Bet on Print

Tangible evidence leads Kevin Slimp to feel good about the future



by Kevin Slimp
kevin@kevinslimp.com



Before you begin reading this column, please answer this question: “Are you sitting down?”

If not, take a moment and find a seat. I’ll wait. Okay, thanks.

I wanted to be sure you were sitting when you read these words: “I honestly believe it’s a great time to be in the print business.”

I’m not blowing smoke. I have no reason to lie to you. My non-newspaper businesses are doing quite well right now, and I have no reason to purposely give you bad information. I’m not looking to sell anything to you. I’m just letting you know, from what I’m seeing and have seen over the past few weeks, it looks like a great time to be in the print game.

Yes, I heard. If you’re in the U.S., your postal rates are going up. And I know you probably read somewhere that all the advertising dollars are going to digital media. However, humor me for a moment.

My columns are carried by industry-related publications on several continents. One of my favorites is GXPRESS (gxpresse.net), which – according to its tagline – covers the news business “in Southeast Asia, India, Australasia and the world.” You’ve got to love a good tagline.

GXPRESS carried a column by Ulbe Jelluma in its May 31, 2021 issue. I wasn’t familiar with Ulbe, but after a little digging I came to realize he speaks at a lot of media conferences in Europe. This quote from Ulbe’s column caught my

attention right away:

“The World Advertising Research Centre Global Ad Trends study shows the evolution of advertising spend and reveals the predicted spend on digital media advertising in 2021 to be up by more than ten percent, and traditional print media 12-14 percent.”

That’s good news. Unless you were in a tossup state during last year’s U.S. election, it seems like ad revenue has no place to go but up. Still, there’s no way a 12-14 percent increase in print advertising revenue is anything but positive.

Ulbe also went on to write:

“It’s not just about what the advertisers want. An ad’s success depends on the desires of the audience too. WARC points to survey data from the Global Web Index (GWI) in the UK and the US that shows younger audiences want to connect with advertising on an emotional level. As a sensory marketing tool, print trumps digital. Its tangibility and haptics give it the power to entertain, move, appeal to the senses, provoke a response and ultimately connect to a brand.”

Don’t get me wrong. I’m not basing my entire hypothesis on one column in GXPRESS. However, it does provide compelling evidence that I’m not the only “expert” on this planet who believes print is making a comeback. True, I might have had to look to Southeast Asia, India, Australasia and Europe to find another believer, but

there are plenty to be found.

What makes me believe print has a bright future? It’s simple, actually. I open my eyes.

When the world said Apple was doomed in 1999, I purchased 150 shares of Apple stock for \$7 a share. Yes, \$7 a share. On January 2 of this year, I was talking with my kids about predicting which stocks will do well, then purchased 100 shares of AMC stock, thinking movie theaters would surely rebound after the pandemic. A few weeks later, I sold the stock for almost ten times what I paid for it.

This column isn’t about picking stocks, or my supposed prowess as a trader. I’m simply saying that when we open our eyes and look to see what’s really happening, the truth doesn’t always jive with what we’re hearing around us.

I’ve noticed some real positives related to print lately. Let me share one.

One of my businesses publishes books in the religion genre. We represent several best-selling theologians and will produce more than 30 titles this year. Just before the pandemic began, our sales had increased significantly in a short amount of time. Over the past few weeks, I’m noticing a significant increase is taking place again.

Authors, hearing voices from the same sources as the rest of us, always want to know if their books will be available in Kindle (digital) versions, and the answer is always yes. When I tell them

that less than 5 percent of sales will come from digital books, they think I must be crazy, or at least, uninformed. To them, the whole world is reading digital books.

The funny thing is, when you remove romance novels from the equation, very few books, relatively, are sold on digital platforms. Well over 90 percent of books are sold in print format. For our company, it’s more like 96 percent. We’re seeing a downturn in digital sales each year, as compared to the year before. And it’s not just us.

My daughter is at the age where she, along with several of her friends, are getting married. I’ve noticed I haven’t received a single digital invitation. I have, however, noticed a growing pile of printed invitations on my living room coffee table. Just yesterday, I paid \$400 to a printer for invitations to her August wedding.

What does all this have to do with newspapers? Everything.

If you believe print is outdated, passe, outmoded (yes, I used my thesaurus for that one), then go ahead and think that. My friends thought I was crazy to buy Apple stock in 1999. My kids thought it was funny that I purchased AMC stock earlier this year. And now? I’m betting on newspapers. In a year or two, we can look back and see how my prediction turned out.

Kevin’s webinar schedule is at:
newspaperacademy.com

A great deal of the time I spent as a graphic designer at the paper, I was able to construct advertising that was effective. I've had to contend with size, space (usually lack of), reverses, artwork and special requests. However, recently I came across an early example of one of my most...

Difficult Ads



As a graphic designer, I strive to create a message that will be read and retained. At my disposal are a number of tools to make my job easier (although that's not always the case). Anyway, I have achieved a certain skill level regardless of the fact that the software I use gets a whole lot more complex. The bottom line is always the message. Sometimes I use art as an attention-getter, sometimes I do not.

Previously, we've discussed the elements of design, the so called "building blocks" that help support the structure of design. These elements won't go away and will be a part of everything that we design. These elements are *Line, Space, Shape, Texture, Size, Value* and *Color*. For this particular ad, we will focus on *Space* and *Size*, as they apply to type as well as any photo or other artwork in the ad.

This particular ad was reduced 50% from its original size. It was a one-day event and the information was very wordy and, to me, more than a little confusing.

I believe what they were trying to get across was the idea that when you take 20% off the clearance, sale or regular price, your final savings would be at least 20% and as high as 60%.

Less confusing, maybe...

This challenge was to get the numbers across and yet get people to read the ad and give them a place to start!

Centering the information would have left me with "negative space" that could have created irregular (yet dominant) shapes.

I chose to create "graphics," so to speak, out of the text/number blocks. See my thumbnail in the next column for space and size.

Space... is the distance or area around objects or items. When you arrange items, careful consideration should be given to the placement of text, graphics and logos. Space helps to set off important items or create areas where the eye can rest. Space is necessary to separate lines of words for easier reading.



These shapes helped me visualize how I could create text blocks to use space and size to organize the information in the ad.

Even blocks of type can create this positive/negative space relationship. In this "Sidewalk Sale" ad, the positive space would be the solid type and the negative space would be the "empty space" around the type—which could be strong enough to overpower the text itself. Think shape rather than art or type. It will help put things in perspective.

Size... is how big or small an item is—whether it's art or type. Size is an easy way to call attention to an item—make it bigger! Size helps organize—small to large. A layout uses a variety of sizes, from the size of the artwork to the size of the type. All these size relationships must work together in the communication. Size can add depth, give a sense of scale, add contrast, break up space, make all the elements work together and establish a consistent look throughout.

In this ad, the 60% and the last 20% are dominant. You can't save 60% unless you take that additional 20% off the original or discounted price! The text varies in size, so I needed to find a way to tie it all together. We read from top to bottom and left to right, so I used "directionals," the grey boxes with the type to lead your eye and underscore the type that would have gotten lost because the percentages were so large. I also justified all the text so as not to generate any "negative space" that could inadvertently create a distracting shape.

This ad was twice the size in our paper, reducing it does not diminish the impact. The "rules" are the same for large or small ads. The idea is to make sure that the reader remembers the information presented.

I created a little dimension by the subtle use of a "drop shadow." Too much use of this effect can muddy the information (like too many bursts) and the effect becomes overused and ineffective. We still know that it's 60% and 20% off, but the "off" has been scaled back. At times these words just seem to "hang" in the space, so use with discretion.

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



Has the Pandemic Changed the Way U.S. Consumers Access News and Information?

New Two Sides survey shows U.S. consumer reading habits have changed, but print on paper remains a valued and sustainable part of everyday life

CHICAGO – May 25, 2021 – Print media has seen significant disruption during the coronavirus pandemic, with lockdowns changing the way we access and consume news and information. But even as familiarity with and use of online media has increased, print on paper remains a widely used and highly valued resource. This according to a new survey, “Paper’s Place in a Post-Pandemic World,” commissioned by non-profit organization Two Sides North America and conducted by global research firm Toluna.



“Print and digital communications are often compared as an either/or proposition to suggest one is better than the other,” says Two Sides North America President Kathi Rowzie, “but our research shows that both play an important part in today’s information-driven economy. Rather than adopt a one-size-fits all digital communications strategy, savvy news organizations and other businesses will continue to offer consumers a choice and in doing so, help to assure that those who are unwilling or unable to access digital information are not disadvantaged.”

As a result of pandemic-related lockdowns, traditional news brands

have successfully developed or enhanced their digital platforms, leading many to turn to online media as a primary source of news and information. But it cannot be assumed that everyone who moved online for news did so by choice or that all who moved online will remain there as restrictions on work, travel and leisure are lifted. While the Two Sides survey showed that 58% of consumers intend to read more news online in the future, this percentage has not changed since 2019. And although print newspaper readership has taken a hit during the pandemic, 49% of consumers say they would be concerned if printed news were to disappear.

It’s important to note that for many Americans, printed communication is

not a choice – it’s a necessity. The U.S. Federal Communications Commission estimates that some 21 million Americans do not have access to broadband internet service,¹ but other organizations, including Microsoft,² report estimates as high as 157 million. In addition, many who have access to internet service cannot afford it. Consumers in rural areas without broadband infrastructure and many among our most vulnerable populations – older Americans, those with disabilities and low-income individuals – depend solely on printed newspapers, magazines, books, bills and statements.

In addition, digital communication is not universally welcomed. Nearly three in 10 consumers (29%) prefer to read newspapers in print, and that number jumps to more than four in 10 for those over age 55. 44% of consumers say they gain a better understanding of a story when reading news in print versus online. When it comes to magazines, 38% of consumers prefer to read in print, with percentages climbing to 49% for those over 55 and 63% for those over 65. When all age groups are included, 44% prefer to read books in print. (Continued on page 13.)

Has the Pandemic Changed.... (Continued from page 12)

As might be expected, the survey shows that younger adults, those aged 18 to 24 in particular, prefer to read all types of media online. But even among these younger consumers, 28% prefer to receive and read personal information from doctors and hospitals in print, 27% prefer to read books in print and 23% prefer to receive bills and statements from service providers in print.

“It’s clear that digital communication is changing the way we receive news and information,” Rowzie says, “but Americans’ growing dependence on digital communication brings its own concerns, which in turn presents opportunities for print media to hold and potentially reclaim a bigger slice of the consumer media pie. Our survey reveals that 52% of consumers believe they spend too much time on their electronic devices, and just over half are concerned that the overuse of digital devices may be damaging their health. And as headlines about online security breaches become a common occurrence, 64% say they are increasingly concerned that their personal information held electronically is at risk of being hacked, stolen, lost or damaged.”

Consumers also are increasingly concerned about the environmental impacts of their communication choices, but there are a lot of misconceptions in the marketplace



about the sustainability of both digital communication and print on paper. “Our survey shows that 67% of consumers believe electronic communication is better for the environment than print on paper,” Rowzie says. “But the miniaturization of today’s electronic devices and the ‘invisible’ nature of digital infrastructure and cloud-based services cause many to vastly underestimate the environmental footprint of electronic communication, which includes the mining of raw materials like iron, copper and rare earth minerals to produce electronic devices, the massive amounts of predominately fossil fuel energy used to manufacture and operate those devices and the server farms that support them, and the enormous and growing amount of e-waste generated.

“Like all manufactured products, paper has an environmental footprint, too,” Rowzie explains. “But in the U.S., it is a material whose industry grows and regrows its own raw material (wood fiber from trees), derives two-thirds of the power to drive its processes from renewable, carbon-neutral biofuel, cleans and returns more than 90% of the water it uses to the environment and recycles more than 95% of the chemicals it uses to turn trees into pulp. In addition, with a 66% recovery rate, paper is the most recycled material in the country, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. That’s a powerful sustainability story the electronics industry cannot match.”

For more facts about the environmental sustainability of print and paper products, visit <https://twosidesna.org/two-sides-fact-sheet>

About Two Sides North America, Inc.

Two Side North America is an independent, non-profit organization that promotes the sustainability of print, paper and paper-based packaging, and dispels common environmental misconceptions about paper products. We are part of the Two Sides global network which operates across North America, South America, Europe, Australia and South Africa.



Don Rush
President
Sherman Publications
666 S. Lapeer Rd.
Oxford, MI 48371
Phone: (248)628-4801
Fax: (248)628-9750
Cell: (810)636-3798
don@shermanpublications.org



Elaine S. Myers
Director
C&G Newspapers
13650 11 Mile Road
Warren, MI 48089
Phone: (586)218-5012
Fax: (586)498-9631
Cell: (248)672-0998
emyers@candgnews.com



Marty Bennett
Vice President
Community Shoppers Guide
117 N. Farmer - P.O. Box 168
Otsego, MI 49078
Phone: (269)694-9431
Fax: (269)694-9145
Cell: (269)370-9469
shoppersguide@sbcglobal.net



George Moses
Director
The Marketeer
110 E. North St., Suite A
Brighton, MI 48116
Phone: (810)227-1575
Fax: (810)227-8189
Cell: (517)404-7807
gmoses@georgemosesco.com



Jon Jacobs
Past President
Buyers Guide
P.O. Box 128
Lowell, MI 49331
Phone: (616)897-9555
Cell: (269)208-9223
Fax: (616)897-4809
Jon@lowellbuyersguide.com



Wes Smith
Director
View Newspaper Group
1521 Imlay City Rd.
Lapeer, MI 48446
Phone: (810)664-0811
Fax: (810)667-6309
Cell: (810)338-7888
wsmith@mihomepaper.com



Fred Jacobs
Sec./Treasurer
J-Ad Graphics
1351 North M-43 Highway
Hastings, MI 49058-0188
Phone: (269)945-9554
Fax: (269)945-5522
Cell: (269)838-0881
fred@j-adgraphics.com



Kara DeChalk
Director
Salesman Publications
102 N. Main Street - P.O. Box 205
Concord, MI 49237-0205
Phone: (517)524-8540
Fax: (517)524-8570
ads@salesmanpublications.com



Jack Guza, Executive Director
jackguza@cpapersmi.com



5198 Windsor Hwy.
Pottersville, MI 48876
Phone/Fax: (800)783-0267
mifreeads.com



Dana Risner, Business Manager
danarisner@cpapersmi.com