

January 2023
INFORMER



**Community
Papers of
Michigan**



Ad - Libs

BY JOHN FOUST

Say It and Do It, or Renegotiate

Joanne is an ad manager with a common-sense approach to managing her team and their goals. She believes in communication – not micro-management – but real communication on how things are going.

“For years,” she told me, “I often found out at the eleventh hour that something wasn’t going as planned. A crucial email wasn’t sent in time, a proposal was held up by research delays, or an ad deadline wasn’t met. Now, those things can happen to even the best members of an ad team at the best of publications. But it puts everyone in an awkward position and threatens to damage our credibility.

“So, I started relying on a little saying that I heard a long time ago: ‘Say what you’re going to do. Then do it, or renegotiate.’ It has become a catchphrase around the office.

Start out with a realistic commitment, by saying what you’re going to do, whether it’s to email certain information to an advertiser by the end of the week, submit a proposal by next Tuesday, or have an ad ready to run by this afternoon.

Then do what you committed to do – on time. It sounds simple, but some salespeople get so excited about a sale that they have a tendency to overpromise. That’s where they can get into trouble by thinking they can double their effort and get things done on schedule. The result is often a missed deadline or sloppy proofreading.

“That’s why renegotiating is so important,” Joanne said. “As soon as they know things aren’t going as promised, it’s best to go back to the other person

and say something like, ‘I’m sorry the proposal I promised by next Tuesday has been delayed. I wanted to tell you as soon as I found out, because you have a right to know exactly what’s going on. Let’s talk about some alternatives. Could later next week possibly work for you? That will allow us to gather more complete demographic information and give you a better view of your target audience.’ Notice how the statement ends with a benefit to the other person.

“As a manager,” Joanne explained, “this approach helps me stay up to speed with what is happening with our advertising department. Plus, it shows the team that this kind of situation does not mean failure. It’s just a speedbump along the way. This is much better than waiting until the last minute to tell me, their advertiser or their coworkers.”

There’s a big lesson in Joanne’s philosophy. Transparency is a key principle of business

communication. The word itself indicates “seeing through,” such as a window allows us to see what’s on the other side. When we are transparent with other people, we eliminate the window shades of pride and embarrassment which tempt us to wait “one more day” before sharing what we fear could be interpreted as bad news.

While bad news is not happy news, this technique can help keep the lines of communication – and customer relations – open.

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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. Email for information: john@johnfoust.com



Reasons Some Papers Grow

It's not luck. There are definite correlations among growing papers.



by Kevin Slimp

I'm going to let you in on a little secret. I don't plan these columns in advance. Most months, I receive an email from newspaper industry executive Jack Guza reminding me that my column is due in a day or two. Jack's messages generally prompt me to take a seat in my upstairs writer's lair to pen a few words, typically about 800, concerning the current state of newspapers. After 25 years of writing this column, I've found that my most popular tend to be columns written just before deadline. And like most writers, I'll use any excuse to delay the inevitable.

It's early January, and as I drove home tonight after spending the day with a newspaper staff in Tennessee, it dawned on me that I have a lot to say to my readers as we begin this new year. Possibly inspired by today's group, as well as several interactions I've had with publishers in recent weeks, I'd like to share some thoughts about where I see community newspapers heading as we begin 2023.

I noted a few months back that my schedule has become surprisingly busy. Most everyone in the newspaper consulting work that I know noticed a serious drop in requests for help beginning a few years ago. Several stopped working with newspapers altogether and moved into consulting with other industries. I wasn't immune.

Newspapers requesting my help took a serious dip three or four years ago. I used the opportunity to begin a couple of new businesses – using much of the advice I had been giving others for the past 30 years – which have turned out to be quite successful, figuring my days working with newspapers were near an end.

Then came 2022. I can't explain why, but the phone – and inbox – began ringing...a lot. I was busier than ever in 2022 – advising papers, redesigning papers, leading webinars, and fulfilling other requests. I hired additional staff to help with my other businesses to free up time to take advantage of the work offered by newspapers. My calendar in 2023 has just a few free days remaining. I'm busier than ever.

Which begs the question: "What is going on?"

I can only make an educated guess, but I'm sensing undeniable correlations as I hear from and visit publishers these days. I'm learning that many locally owned community papers had an excellent year in 2022, prompting them to reinvest in growing their papers. Unlike in prior years, I hear from papers with increasing readership and advertising revenue.

Luck? Maybe a little. But most of what's happening at these papers can't be attributed to chance. Here are some of the correlations I'm seeing in growing community papers:

- **Growing papers invest in their communities.** Locally owned papers have an undeniable stake in



their communities, causing them to invest more heavily in those areas.

- **Growing papers invest in their staff.** In my experience, it's rare to see staff cuts at successful papers. We've all heard the saying, "You can't cut your way to growth." I've certainly found this true in my businesses and the newspapers I've worked with over the years. Growing papers train and reward their staff, creating better newspapers.
 - **Growing newspapers create additional revenue** by creating income through related products, not "get rich quick" schemes. Papers I've worked with that experience growth tend to generate niche publications, quality special sections, and other products that fit the work they've been doing for decades.
 - **Growing papers maintain a quality online presence** while understanding most of their income will come from print products for the foreseeable future. Planning for the long term doesn't mean giving up on the successes of the past.
 - **Growing papers have management and staff that work together as teams.** Reporting to "unknown" voices in
- far-away cities leads to disjointed staff, often competing against each other instead of working together toward a common goal.
- **Growing newspapers make their customers feel important.** While visiting with circulation staff at newspapers, I often suggest writing personal notes on each resubscription notice that goes out. It's just one of many ways we make readers feel important.
- I could go on, but I'm guessing you get the idea. There are a lot of community papers doing well right now. Sometimes I feel a little overwhelmed by the requests but feel very fortunate at the same time. My 2023 calendar includes consultations, redesigns, staff training events, and more. I've had to cut back on my convention speaking to keep up with all the requests. Most of the publishers who call me don't need my help for their papers to be successful. They're already successful. And that may be the ultimate clue to what is happening at these newspapers. Growing papers tend to invest in their communities and staff to succeed long-term, not just produce quick income in the short term.
- My work today is done.
811 words.

A New Year... and I still have last year's challenges—but that's another story. Last month I said I liked doing the "Special Sections," but I also liked...

Crazy Cupids

Ad Talk

with Ellen Hanrahan

Happy New Year, but we are close to February and I wanted to share this promotion—one of many I learned at an IFPA conference many year's ago (mid-late 90s.). These conferences were a great place to pick up ideas on various promotions as well as ideas pertaining to sales, production, distribution, management as well as being a source for the latest in technology and the exchange of experiences.

By the way, this promotion can be used easily with a change of themes: **flowers** for Mother's Day, **ties** for Father's Day, **ghosts** for Halloween, **snowflakes** for winter/Christmas, ... you get the idea.

Our Cupids are on the Loose!

We would start the promotion a couple of weeks before with the story that our "Crazy Cupids" were on the loose and that we needed the reader's help in getting them back. A sample of the full-page that ran prior to Valentine's Day can be seen in the far right column.

We set up a display in our office, with the appropriate romantic theme, and the prizes that were available. Back then, we had a drop-off box at our offices, or readers could mail or fax their entries before the deadline (delivery method has changed!) However, reader response was amazing (the number of entries varied throughout the years, but we had gotten more than 950 entries in some years.

Keeping with the romance theme, we had dinners, flowers, candy, etc., as our prizes.

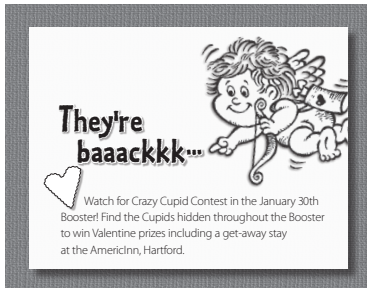
The winners (with the correct answers) were placed in a drawing (in fairness, a person could only win one prize).

We published the winning names prior to Valentine's Day. It was nice to be able to see the "excited winners" come in and pick up the prizes. Maybe that's why I liked this promotion—there was a sense of excitement and expectation (and love) in the air! Ah, I miss some of these events...

Don't Box Me In

We also made sure that there were pages where our retailers could promote their Valentine specials within a specific grouping and through the years we learned to be more flexible.

Our group headings were usually a 6-column by one- or two-inches high. But that didn't always work out, so rather than make multiples of the heading, we eliminated the "box" around the ad. This allowed us to "float" the heading and we were able to increase or decrease the heading as needed. I will address this in a future article, but I have included a visual underneath the reduced full-page ad (38%).



2005 Crazy Cupid Winners

SCHAUER CENTER TICKETS CHAPTER 6 MUSIC & COMEDY Delores Skidmore, West Bend	DINNER CERTIFICATE: Cassandra Frank, Huntsford Patricia Owen, West Bend Harold Krebs, Hartford Debra Baerwald, Iron Ridge	HEART PLATTER Cheryl Sloczier, Kewaskum	LEAD CRYSTAL HEART BOWL Janet Conrad, Hartford	HEART CANDY BOX Daisy Haas, Brownsville	HEART CANDY BOX Ken Unerl, Jackson	FLOWERS: Debbie Peters, Hartford Beth Seif, Slinger Mr. & Mrs. Roland Spaeth, Rubicon Patricia Watkins, Hartford Kathy Van Gompel, Hubertus
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Congratulations

To participate in this promotion, I believe the advertisers were assessed a \$10 fee which helped defray the cost of the prizes. Sold on a first-come, first-served basis, so we could control the number of cupids and maintain a "special" event quality.

Any cupid artwork used in this promotion was also off-limits for use in other ads to avoid confusion. The art was used for put into a special folder on the main server. Artwork could be sized to fit the ad, but no reverses, flipping or rotating the art was allowed.

Crazy Cupids!

Win great prizes like...

- A one night stay at the Americinn • Dinners
- Flowers • Crystal • Plush and more!

CHECK OUT THE PARTICIPATING ADVERTISERS listed in the entry form below—then find their ads and match the cupid from this page with the cupid in their ad. Write the number of the cupid that appears in the ad on the line next to the participating advertiser's name.

Get 'em all correct and we'll place your entry in our drawing to win Special Valentine Prizes! **Happy entries must be received by Wednesday, Feb. 9th at 12:00 noon.** Winning names will be published in the Tuesday, Feb. 15th Boosters. Winners will be notified by phone.

Even if you don't win in our drawing, be sure to take advantage of the sweet values offered by our participating advertisers—you'll still come out a winner!

Crazy Cupid Entry Form!

Here's your chance to win Valentine prizes. Fill in the entry form below and drop off in the Cupid containers at the Hartford Booster, 31 West Sumner Street or the West Bend Booster, 834 South Main. You can also mail to "Crazy Cupids" c/o The Hartford Booster, 31 W. Sumner St., Hartford, WI 53027, or FAX to "Cupid" at 262-673-2907. All entries must be received by Wednesday, February 9th at 12 noon. Winners will be notified by phone.

Buy-A-Master	FNB Hartford Investment Services	Schwab's Floorcovering
Cedar Community OMA	Rick's Plumbing	JM Jewelry
Cedar Community RRI	Expedition Supply	Julier Transportation LLC
Mountain's Piggly Wiggly	Testings	Bank Shot
Brunner Furniture	Jackson Recreation Dept.	C & R Hardware
Camera Case	Hartford Savings Bank	Hartford Business Improvement District
Julien's Floral	West Bend Vacation Center	Little Red Inn
Dodge Co. Housing Authority	Track Outfitters of West Bend	Minecraft
First National Bank	Ackerville Lawn & Garden	

NAME _____ PHONE _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____ ZIP _____

Sorry, Booster employees and their immediate families are not eligible.

Remember Valentine's Day Gifts

The artwork for this heading sample has been reduced to 50% of its original size. The free-floating concept allowed our "paginator" to fill any size space without having to create a specific size—try it! Flexibility is a good thing, and it allowed us to vary the size of the heading without creating multiple sizes.

Best Wishes for a Special New Year!

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, e-mail: hanrahan.ln@att.net Ellen Hanrahan ©01/2023



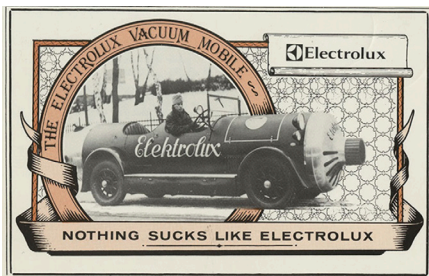
By
Mark W.
Rummel
Fenton, MI

Each new year, most people make resolutions to be better, plus we look ahead to predict what might happen in the coming 365 days. It's also the time folks put together lists of "the best" or "the worst" of this or that.

The website BoredPanda.com gathered a list of some of the worst advertising slogans and taglines ever created... and it was a pretty long list. Apparently when some creative ad people struggle too hard to be creative, disaster follows.

Here are a handful of those worst ads, slogans and even double-meanings, in no particular order. Hopefully, none of us will imitate some of these really bad concepts in this new 2023 year.

"Nothing sucks like Electrolux"



We realize that IS what a vacuum cleaner does, but you don't have to SAY it like that, do you??

"Good Luck"



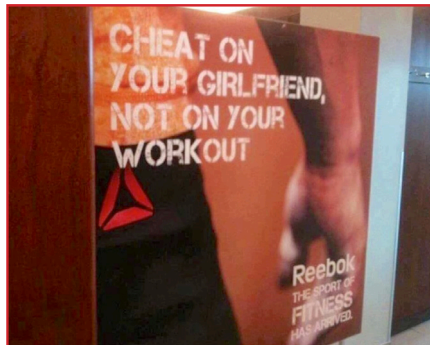
An airline that tells you "good luck"

YOU'D BETTER SHOP AROUND:

Let's avoid repeating some of the worst ad messages ever created

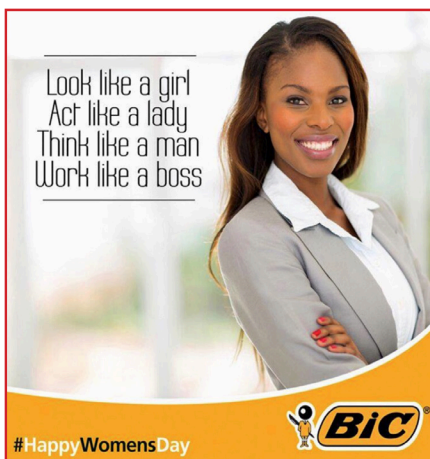
whenever you fly with them doesn't really inspire a lot of confidence...

"Cheat on your girlfriend, not on your workout"



You'd think a world-wide company like Reebok would have more taste, but no...

"Look like a girl, act like a lady, think like a man, work like a boss"



Hmmm, could you possibly offend any more people? This seems to try being a "feel-good ad" but it instantly insults girls, ladies, men and even the boss. While that probably wasn't their intent, it probably sold fewer pens because so many people were insulted or maligned.

"It's not for women"



Why would any company insult half its potential customers, for no good reason? Are they trying to appeal only to men? Why? Most smart businesses welcome all the customers they can.

"If we can't have fresh air, at least we can have fresh muffins"



I don't even know where to begin here. Let's talk gloom and doom and THEN invite folks to buy the product. FAIL !!!

Mark worked at papers in Saginaw, Port Huron and the Thumb Area, plus served on the CPM Board. He and wife Sally even worked for The Walt Disney Company. He also opened and ran a successful restaurant for 17 years. He still does social media work from Fenton, Mich. MarkWRummel@gmail.com

Building Main Street Not Wall Street



How Wall Street Extracts Dollars From a Community

by John Newby

When I chose to name my weekly column, “Building Main Street, not Wall Street”, I did so with the thought of providing information to small and medium-sized communities; communities that often lack the financial resources to climb the mountains that must be climbed to transform and/or revitalize. Occasionally, my topic will touch on universal methods that allow Wall Street to transfer dollars from any community to their bottom line – this is one of those weeks.

Let’s look at a great example of how Wall Street quietly extracts major dollars from every community around the country. Let me start by saying, if you bank locally, these funds typically remain local benefiting your community. If you don’t bank locally or regionally, these funds leave your community or region forever, never to return.

Let’s start by using a typical \$50 local transaction. When a consumer shops and makes a purchase with \$50 in cash, they will receive \$50 in goods. More importantly the retailer likewise receives a full \$50 from that transaction. In other words, everybody wins and that full \$50 remains within the community to be spent again and again.

On the other side of the coin, most of us also utilize credit cards. Many of us use them almost exclusively for the sake of convenience. Let’s see how that shakes out when a consumer purchases that same item via a credit card.

The consumer will still receive that same \$50 value from their purchase. The retailer however will receive approximately \$46 or \$47 as Wall Street has extracted their 3-4% credit card transaction fee. In essence that community has lost 4% of every credit card transaction forever. Some will say this is but a small price to pay for the convenience. But, while convenience is great, don’t be lulled into thinking that it is a small price.

As these credit card transactions increase, what happens to that \$50? As the number of these transactions increase, after roughly 25 transactions, that entire \$50 that was circulating throughout the community as cash is now completely wiped out through credit card fees never to be seen in that community again. Imagine the amount of cash flowing out of every community in the County through a simple thing such as credit card fees. Of course, that only magnifies if one isn’t paying off their credit card debts each month. At that point, your community is losing those interest dollars; that is another discussion for another day.

Don’t take this the wrong way, it would be nearly impossible for many to forgo credit card usage, that is not the intent of this column. The intent is to make

people aware of where their money is going and how that impacts the entire community. As with anything, moderation is the key, it is no different with your usage of credit cards.

The point that needs to be made is if you are banking with a Wall Street bank, you might want to reconsider your banking partner.

By banking locally, or even regionally, you are keeping those dollars within your local or regional community. Those dollars are then used to make home loans, auto loans, and the list goes on, to local customers spending local dollars with local businesses.

It is true that only one of us won’t be able to change our community. It takes an army of people all rowing in the same direction to facilitate real change or transformation. The army need not all make major changes, but if each of us make some little changes, over time, all those little changes equal huge results. Start making little changes for a greater tomorrow.

John Newby, from SW Missouri, is a nationally recognized Columnist, Speaker, & Publisher. He consults with Community, Business & Media. His “Building Main Street, not Wall Street,” column is enjoyed by 60+ communities around the country. As founder of Truly-Local, he assists community and business leaders in building synergies that create vibrant communities. He can be reached at: info@Truly-Localllc.com



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28 MILLION
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still do NOT have
a website

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• **SMB's Don't Want DIY**

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• **SiteSwan is the Perfect Fit**

SiteSwan websites are affordable, beautifully designed, fully responsive, search engine friendly and only take minutes to build.

• **Complete Web Design Business-in-a-Box**

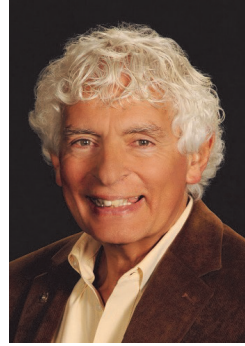
We're more than just a website builder. We provide everything you need to build a profitable web design business.



Contact us today! www.SiteSwan.com



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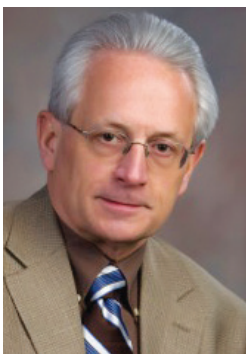
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