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**Community
Papers of
Michigan**



BY JOHN FOUST

Ad - Libs

The Power of Enthusiasm

There's a story about a professor of literature at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. As he approached retirement, someone from the newspaper interviewed him. During the course of their conversation, the reporter asked the wise old professor about the most beautiful words he had ever read. He paused for a second or two and said, "Walk with light."

"That truly is beautiful," the reporter said. "Who wrote those magnificent words? Shakespeare? Milton? Keats?" "No," he replied. "It's a sign at a crosswalk across from the campus on Franklin Street."

Walk with light. We could discuss the deep meanings and implications of "light" all day long. But for now, let's use it as a metaphor for enthusiasm. When we go through the day with enthusiasm, we cast a positive light all around us.

Don't get the wrong idea about enthusiasm. Jumping up and down is animation, not enthusiasm. While some people are naturally animated in their enthusiasm, genuine enthusiasm is an inner sense of optimism, excitement and joyful anticipation. My Great-Aunt Maude, who lived to the age of 106, was one of the most enthusiastic people I've ever known. When I visited her in her later years, she radiated enthusiasm with a great big smile that said, "I'm happy you're here."

It's been said that the last four letters of the word "enthusiasm" stand for "I am sold, myself." That's especially true in the world of advertising, because it's our business to sell and create ads that help our clients sell their products. If we aren't excited about that, how in the world can we expect our advertisers to be excited about buying what we sell?

Enthusiasm is not frivolous. When it comes to work, enthusiasm is a roll-up-your-sleeves word. Ralph Waldo Emerson famously wrote, "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm." Elbert Hubbard, a noted author and philosopher said, "Enthusiasm is the great hill-climber." And opera star Placido Domingo once commented, "My strength is my enthusiasm."

Some people are naturally enthusiastic, while others may struggle with the idea. After all, it's difficult to be excited all day long, even for people for whom enthusiasm comes naturally. So, how do you become more enthusiastic? Many believe that the secret is to break it into smaller pieces. For example, instead of making a general statement like, "I'm going to be a more enthusiastic person," focus your attention on something like, "I'm going to be enthusiastic about contacting that list of prospects." Then you can attack that list with

greater energy for shorter periods of time.

Enthusiasm is a matter of setting a goal and managing your attitude as you reach toward that goal. You might say, "I'm going to get excited about making my report at the next sales meeting." With such a specific and doable goal, that effort can lead to an even better report at the following meeting, and so on. That's how to build positive momentum.

Enthusiasm can light the path.

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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





By
Mark W.
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For more than 100 years, **Time Magazine** has been informing readers about national and world news. **Time** currently has 1.3 million print subscribers and 250,000 digital readers.

But like so many other magazines, **Time** is nothing like it once was.

Gone are the 96-page and larger weekly issues, crammed with up-to-the-minute tightly-written stories, multiple pictures and many print ads.

LIKE MANY OTHER magazines, **Time** began offering online stories in 2009, trying to follow their readers' choices.

Also like so many others, **Time** built a readership paywall to gain needed revenue from those growing numbers of online customers in 2011. Page counts on actual print issues steadily declined, as their advertisers melted away during the next decade.

Readership suffered, and — as so many paywall periodicals have learned — not many former print readers followed the thinner digital versions. **Time** altered its publication schedule to twice monthly, but income didn't grow. Fewer than one in every 10 former print readers wanted to pay for news they could read on their phones, not in print. Plus, literally hundreds of other news sources were always tempting potential readers.

What's a respected, national magazine to do?

AS OF MAY 1, 2023, Time Magazine is dropping its paywall, the company has announced. Leaders are choosing to try expanding the **Time** audience to

YOU'D BETTER SHOP AROUND:

Time Magazine says "Bye-bye" to its paywall. Is this a good (or bad) idea?

host special readership and promotional projects, instead of making more money from hard-to-find digital readers. The magazine will also include its 100 years' worth of archived content... all for free.

Time CEO Jessica Sibley told Axios the move is both an editorial and a business decision. **Time** plans to produce more ad-supported, digital content across Time's website, mobile app and social media.

"THE OPPORTUNITY to reach more audiences globally, that are younger, and that are diverse, is really important..." Sibley said.

Increasing the reach of the **Time** brand is a key focus in growing **Time's** worldwide business, especially across events. The company believes dropping the paywall will help **Time** expand its audience — proving once again there is no one-size-fits-all model for modern publishers today, whether they're national publications or hometown papers.

For **Time**, the word is "audience." They want eyeballs which they can offer to advertisers, versus a minimal amount of digital reader income. This plan might work for a globally-read magazine.

PERSONALLY, I think every formerly-paid publication needs a paywall. But I think their annual cost should be minimal. I totally believe it's better to have 10,000 readers each paying you \$25 a year for digital access, versus 1,250 people paying you \$200 annually, for an example.

Not everyone agrees, of course, and I understand that. But publications should share their efforts with as many people as possible, by staying affordable. It's not always easy, and this "paywall / no paywall" story is still being written.

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's mostly retired but still does some social media work in Fenton, Mich. Comments are always invited at MarkWRummel@gmail.com

This month I am going to follow up on the use of grey in advertising. Periodically I mention that contrast can help create effective ads, but here again...

Grey Matters 2



Gray matters—the sequel... In the past I talked a bit about the importance of creating maximum contrast. I also said to be aware of the use of text on photos. This month I will expand on that topic.

It started with coupons and how coupons could be more effective if there were less art. It turns out that a number of the ads would be improved considerably just by taking out the background picture. A pretty simple solution, but I wanted to go a little beyond telling you to watch the screened artwork. The ads below have been scaled considerably. The smaller size in no way compromises the message. In this case, bigger just made it more of a waste of space. And truth be told, I would do the ad on the right differently as well—when you know better, you do better.

Background art—so wrong

Anyway, I located an ad (had to dig really deep, but it's perfect for "What Not to Do"). It not only had a screened background, but also had some other common mistakes that prevented it from presenting an effective message.

I even lightened the screen so you could see some of the text! Also, bad choice of typeface if you are going to place a message over art.

Text with thin and thick serifs can be difficult to read, so consider readability. Anyway, let's compare some of the alterations that were used on the two ads below.

I had to do considerable alterations because



This ad has too much going on. Any one effect would create a focal point. Instead, these elements compete with each other and the result is an ad whose message is secondary to the "decorations" used in the ad.

the ad used *Type 1* fonts! The ad below left is the original and there is a screened background of flowers along with a heart border and some bunnies. This is wrong on so many levels, and adds up to lots of visual activity (destruction?), and the message (words) get lost in all of the visual clutter.

By removing the background photo (which is not readily recognizable once you get all the text in the ad) you could still leave the heart border because it doesn't "compete" with the interior photo anymore, but you'd still have too many themes going on... so simplify!

I chose instead to keep the bunnies, modify them and remove the heart border because of the fact that it is a "Spring" sale and the bunnies are more spring-like than the hearts. Besides it takes a while to correctly place the hearts from a type font—it's easier now, but to do it correctly, you have to be even more aware of placement and visual alignment.

The "revised ad" has a 5 point rule border at 50% to set off the ad. Typeface is the same, Garamond, but the sizing and positioning of some of the text was changed. I made the word "annual" smaller to emphasize the "Spring Sale" aspect and increased the "Savings" info because those are good price reductions.

Finally, I replaced the heart dingbats with rectangles to repeat the shape of the bunnies in the banner (without introducing another design element into the mix).



This ad is more readable which means that the message will get through to the reader. You need an attention-getting device, but too many act as a deterrent. Pick wisely and avoid conflicting graphics.

These are relatively simple changes to make, but if you start to create the ad with some of these thoughts in mind, you will definitely be getting the message across more cleanly and effectively.



By request

Too often a customer requests that we put the artwork in the background or "ghost it" and put the text on top. When you don't have a lot of space to start with, the background art competes for attention. Unintended focus! The text is more difficult to read because there is too much pattern in the background. The text is fighting the artwork for attention.

The strong grey horizontal and vertical bars in the artwork above separates the text and makes it difficult to read the ad.

While the idea of jail-type art seems to go with the "Jailhouse Restaurant" name, remember that this is still a restaurant, with a western theme, but the emphasis should be on the food and menu items.

Sometimes we're so excited about an idea or concept that we fail to think it through properly. The idea is to get the message across. The idea of "ghosting" artwork behind the text can work, but you must create the ad with the artwork, not just add it to the background. Text needs to enhance the art and vice-versa in order for it to be effective. Don't lose sight of the fact that the message or information in the ad takes precedence. Find a different way to achieve a "western theme" while focusing on the menu and opening up the ad.

One more time...

If you add a lot of grey (although color can also have a "grey" appearance), in the form of art or screens, you further dilute the contrast and your ad will look weak. Strong contrast can call attention and create a focal point.

The strongest contrast on newsprint is the use of black and white— so keep screens and grey artwork to a minimum. Next month I'll give some visual ideas for the "Jail House" restaurant advertising... and maybe rework the "Kountry Crafts" spring sale!

Spring is on it's way...

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.jn@att.net Ellen Hanrahan ©04/2023

Advertising Results

You think I'd have learned this lesson long ago



by Kevin Slimp
kevin@kevinslimp.com

It dawned on me this morning that my schedule changes significantly from day to day. There are always some things that have to get done most days. Regardless of what else is on my schedule, I spend an hour or two contacting customers and developing marketing ideas. One thing I've learned about marketing: the more time I spend on it, the more it pays off.

In addition to my other businesses, I own two businesses in the online training arena. Most of you have probably visited newspaperacademy.com at some time. I also own a company that provides online training and CECs (continuing education credits) for folks outside the newspaper world. Most people began attending webinars as a result of the recent pandemic. However, I've been leading webinars for almost 30 years. I remember when Bob DeBusk, the executive director of Tennessee Press Association, and I visited with the president of a local college to begin planning webinars using the college's satellites – this was very early in the development of the Internet – to teach classes to newspaper staffs across the globe.

After so many years leading webinars, you would think I'd know just about all there is to know about the webinar business. It wasn't until three or four years ago I noticed a significant trend. The more I advertise and promote a webinar, the more people attend.

What is it they say about

doctors? Something about doctors being the worst patients.

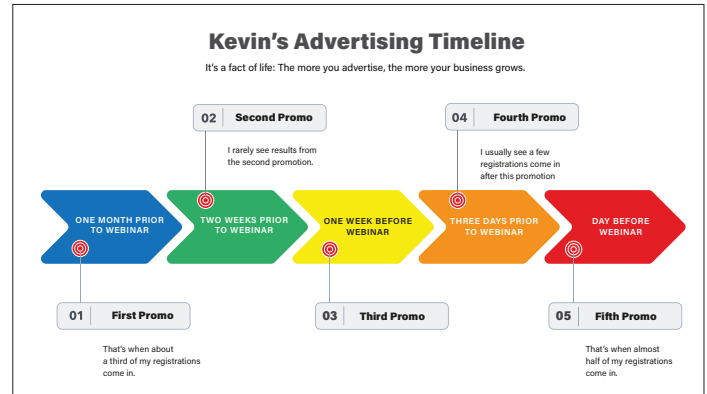
After training newspapers for more than 30 years, owning an advertising business when I was younger, and co-leading sessions with the brightest minds in the advertising world, I should have figured this out a long time ago. I'm a slow learner.

So, what happened three or four years ago? Before then, I was always careful not to "bother" my potential customers. For instance, if I had an upcoming webinar, I would send the information out to press associations, hoping they would promote it. I'd probably send an email blast to my customers so they could put it on their calendars. I was afraid by over-promoting an event, I would turn off potential customers. What was I thinking?

I began collecting email addresses from everyone in the newspaper business who had ever written to me, every group I had spoken to, and others in the industry. As my list grew into the thousands, I experimented with sending out a couple of reminders about an upcoming webinar. It helped, but I didn't notice a significant increase in attendance.

Things took off when I began consistently reminding folks about upcoming webinars. Now, if I have an upcoming webinar on photo editing, I'll start sending mass emails a month before the event. Then, as the date approaches, I'll send out an email a week before the webinar, then another three days before the class. Finally, I'll send a reminder email the day before the webinar.

What have I learned? Registrations generally come in three waves. A good number of folks, usually about a



third of the attendees, will register when they see the first announcement about a month before the webinar. Another group will register after seeing an email three days before the class. Finally, about half of my attendees sign up for a class after seeing an email one day before the webinar. If you pay attention, you will probably see at least five or six emails about each of my webinars.

My other company, which offers CEC credits for folks outside the newspaper industry, hosts multiple webinars each week. We are constantly reminding customers of those webinars about upcoming classes. The more we remind them, the more they register.

What does this have to do with newspapers? Tomorrow, I'll be spending all day with the advertising staff of a newspaper in Tennessee. I always enjoy working with nearby papers. It's nice to work in person instead of online now and then. We'll discuss ways to increase advertising and help our advertisers create more effective ad campaigns. One lesson I'll try to instill is there is no such thing as too much advertising. We're helping our advertisers when we help them understand that – and find ways to reach more potential customers. An-

other lesson is that we need to stay in constant contact with advertisers. Like my webinar attendees, the more we keep in touch, the more we'll see results.

Where have all the inserts gone?

Publisher Bill Derby wrote to me yesterday to ask if everyone else sees a slowdown in inserts at their papers. He also asked, "If so, do they think they'll be coming back?"

I created a quick post on social media, asking publishers for their take on the subject. I got a lot of responses. Those at larger papers wrote that inserts are way down and probably not returning. Answers from smaller papers ranged from "Ours are way down" to "We're doing okay, but the bigger papers around here are struggling" to "Ours are up, and we're getting more inquiries each week."

So, there you have it. Most folks say their insert business is down or "way down." However, some say their inserts business is holding up, some even increasing. I need to look into what's happening at these papers that are increasing their inserts and see what we can learn from them.

It Pays To Become a 'REQUESTER' Periodical - *By Hillary Carroll*



Hillary Carroll

It's no secret that Periodical mail is the most affordable commercial mailing class. With postage as low as 13 - 15 cents per copy and guaranteed mailbox delivery, it's hard to argue with the advantages. Unfortunately, the process to qualify remains elusive for most Publishers.

Why is this? Simply put, the post office loses money on every qualifying Periodical title. Marketing mail and other classes are significantly more lucrative for the goliath that remains plagued by debt. It behooves USPS to keep the Periodicals mailing class close to the chest.

Despite this, entering a Periodical is a great way for Publishers to make the switch from carrier delivery to mailboxes. It can be used to expand market penetration, offer a new or improved product, and garner trust with advertisers.

One major thing to point out, this mailing class is available to free circulation newspapers. There are

stricter requirements for 'Requester' titles, but they are easily managed if you know what to look for. An example is that advertising percentage cannot exceed 75% in more than 25% of a publication's issues. For a weekly, this is 13 issues per year.

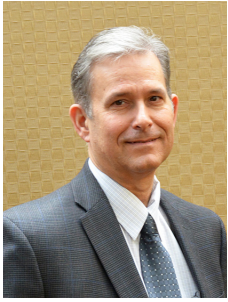
More good news for Publishers, last year USPS updated a postal ruling to allow up to 50% of nonsubscriber / nonrequester copies to be mailed at the inside county rate. This means increased sampling and higher overall circulations are possible at very affordable rates.

While the specifics can be tricky if you're new to Periodicals, it's like learning to ride a bike. Once you're up and running, it definitely pays to become a Periodical.

For more information on how to qualify for this prestigious, albeit elusive, mail class contact hillary@requesterpro.com. Larry Behnke High Springs, Florida

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BUILDING MAIN STREET NOT WALL STREET

Brick-n-Mortar Must Become Unique

by John Newby



Graeme Simison recently said, “There’s definitely a role for online booksellers, but they can’t host events, bring people together, and form a personal relationship in the way a brick-and-mortar store and its staff can. Despite nearly two years of COVID induced struggle impacting typical brick-n-mortar retail locations, in general they have rebounded rather well. Don’t let the naysayers tell you brick-n-mortar is dead. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Late in 2022, Simon Property Group reported that positive momentum at its malls across the country has been consistent. Occupancy at Simon’s U.S. malls and premium outlets was at 94.5% in Sept. 30, 2022, as compared to 92.8% in Sept. 2022. The company said it is on track to achieve pre-COVID occupancy in 2023. “The flight towards brick and mortar is real,” stated CEO of Simon Property Group, David Simon while on a call with analysts. He added that new store openings and lease renewals has not slowed down.

Prior to the pandemic, the media was constantly pounding the tune that brick-n-mortar was dying. During the pandemic, they only accelerated that message. Since the pandemic, based on retail figures and shoppers, it is now apparent that retail has not just survived, but is doing quite well. But, don’t let these positive numbers allow you to rest on your successes. Ominous trends are still in place that spell trouble on the horizon for retail businesses unwilling to transform how they conduct business.

Certain changes are already underway as shopping centers and retail businesses adapt to the new demands and shopping styles of consumers. “People continue to really want to go out and experience being in an environment to see, touch and try product,” explained Keith Jelinek, a senior managing director at consulting and advisory firm Ankura. As was the case starting a couple years ago, many shoppers today expect an entertainment-driven and holistic social experience when they visit malls and

retail business.

The trends are speaking very loudly. To be successful in the future, business owners must do much more than just create and/or sell products and services. In addition to selling products, they must also match compelling products with compelling experiences and emotional settings or feelings. They must not only master the supply chain aspects of running a retail business, but they must become able to master the experience and emotional side of the business as well.

How does a business provide those unique experiences not usually found online? At the risk of stating the obvious, one can start with over-the-top customer service. What is over-the-top customer service? It can take the form of many things, among them might be knowing your customers by name. It might be having a database that indicates when birthdays and anniversaries are. It might be working with other local businesses to provide compelling packages and services. It might look like promotions that incentivize repeat in-person visits. It might be as simple as local-only coupons and gift certificates. It might be an e-commerce system that is easy to use and in turn drives future in-store visits and purchases. It might be live local music at various times of the week creating a social setting, in turn becoming popular while receiving social media attention. The list is practically endless of ideas that ought to be considered.

While no one has all the answers to what makes a business successful, anyone can follow or mimic the

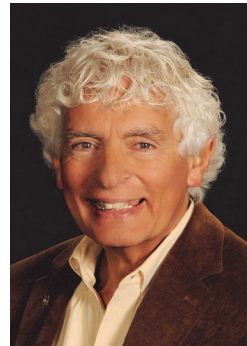
path most successful businesses have traveled. It should be noted, being unique in one industry may differ from uniqueness in another industry – you must find that uniqueness that is indeed, unique to your industry. Throughout my entire career in marketing and consulting, without any doubt, the most successful businesses have always been those able to create unique experiences for their customers. One thing is sure, businesses that don’t find their niche or their unique experience offering will find their struggles increasing in the coming years. To survive, finding that unique experience will be crucial. Don’t wait, start building for that unique experience today, your future might well depend upon it.



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 read by 60+ communities around the country. As founder of Truly-Local, he assists communities, media and business leaders in building synergies that create vibrant communities. He can be reached at: John@Truly-Local.org.



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