Publish

JULY 2023

SALES BEST PRACTICES

Part 1

THE ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY PUBLISHERS acp

CONTENT/INDEX

Publish

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Association of Community Publishers

IN THIS JULY ISSUE...

COMING NEXT MONTH

The August *Publish* will take a look at more “best practices” that may go beyond the sales department. As always, we will also cover the people, information and issues that are influencing the community publishing industry.

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ACP BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOMINATIONS

ACP Board of Director Nominations for the fall elections will open on July 17, 2023 and close on August 11, 2023. The positions are for 2-year terms that will commence on January 1, 2024. Any ACP member in good standing is eligible to run for one of the positions.

Positions up for election in this cycle are the six At-Larger Board Member seats on the Board of Directors. All current incumbent directors have acknowledged their intent to re-run for their current seats.

Additional nominations should be made by email to office@communitypublishers.com no later than August 11, 2023 and include the following information: Nominee's Name, Member Company, Company Position, Email Address, Mailing Address, and a description of the nominee's qualifications that will be used in the election information sent to members.

After vetting all candidates to make sure they are employees of members in good standing, the formal candidate announcements will be made September 1, 2023 and in the September Publish. The election process will take place between October 2, 2023 and the end of day October 13, 2023. Election results will be announced no later than November 2, 2023. Any questions related to this upcoming election can be directed to the ACP Office at 877-203-2327.

Best Practice - Advertising SalesTip

Less is more when it comes to the number of options you include in an advertising proposal.

Most advertisers want **YOU** to do the work of narrowing down what their options will be, based on their bussiness needs and your knowledge of how your advertising solutions can meet those needs. By carefully curating a limited number of options, you can showcase your expertise and present the most effective and relevant choices for each advertiser.

SALES THESE DAYS

BY MANUEL KARAM

I'm always amazed when I talk to sales reps about how things work in the field. It seems to me that decision makers are harder than ever to catch. A lot are not on site, or if they are, they're too busy for an impromptu conversation. They also have different preferences in how you talk to them. Some like phone calls, some like emails, some like texts, some even like Facebook Messenger-you just don't know how you're going to connect.

Recently at a conference I was talking to a publisher about his sales team. I asked how things were going, and he said "OK, but our team needs to be making a lot more cold calls." I then inquired whether he gets cold calls as a publisher and if he does business with anyone like that. "No", he said, "but I'm different." He thought about what he had just said and we had a laugh. Does anyone like being interrupted during a busy day with an unexpected phone call from someone who's selling something?

There's nothing wrong with cold calls per se and I'm not saying your sales team should stop doing them completely. New business is important and sometimes cold calls hit and pan out. But what's the success rate? If there are other strategies that have a higher success rate, would it make sense to allocate more time for the other strategies alongside cold calls?

As managers and publishers, we often track our sales teams' activity based on how many phone calls they're making. Sometimes I walk back to our sales department and I hear complete silence. But everyone is typing or texting away with customers. And that's OK I guess. Customer activity is what's most important in the end. ■

BEAR AND BLUEBERRIES

BY DOUGLAS FRY

If you read the monthly column, and I can't blame you if you don't, you know that I like to recall events that altered my life. Well, here's another one. This story may help us understand how to deal with competition.

Let's start by talking about competition. We all have competitors. Sometimes it seems they come in to our market and scoop up all the advertising dollars and leave very little for us. When I was in sales, and I'm going to date myself here, the Yellow Pages folks would come into our city once a year like an annual locust swarm and leave behind a parched, barren advertising wasteland. I remember calling on customers each one telling me, "We spent all our advertising dollars with the Yellow Pages."

Maybe you have experienced something like that as well. So, what can you do to combat such a scorched earth type of marketing blitz? This is where the bear comes in.

We were hiking in the beautiful, snow-capped peaks of the Olympic Mountains in Washington State. My father was the bravest man alive because he willingly took 8 twelve year old boys hiking in the mountains for a week. The parents of those boys knew he was a bit loony for taking on that task. However, my dad is the eternal optimist. He could find the good in any situation.

Our situation was good. It was one of those rare weeks in the Pacific Northwest during which you could actually see the sun and the sky was blue instead of gray. We were hiking down from Mount Gladys and the cleverly named Gladys Divide. As we hiked along, we noticed a large patch of wild blueberries up on the ridge. We dropped our packs and attacked the hillside until we reached the berry patch.

We became a devouring horde that left nothing in our wake. We picked the blueberries and ate them as only twelve year old boys can. Gary Lindstrom was the first to glance up and exclaimed, with blue stained teeth, that a bear was cresting the ridge and heading our way. We knew we were no match for the bear so we beat a hasty retreat to our packs below. When we were a safe distance from the bear we gazed in awe as that predator ravaged the blueberries.

There wasn't much we could do at the time but hike on to our intended campsite on Flapjack Lakes. (Please remember I am not making any of this up, especially the names.) We set up camp and talked about the two flat, round lakes we stared at. The lakes were named because from above they looked like two pancakes or flapjacks. Naturally, that got us talking about what we would eat next. We decided that we would have pancakes for breakfast the next morning in honor of the locale. We further decided that the pancakes would only be edible if they had lots of fresh blueberries ensconced in each bite.

A plan was hastily made to take back our blueberry patch. Perhaps the bear didn't understand that twelve year olds need lots of food. It was a mile or so back up the trail to where the berry patch was so we had plenty of time to refine our plan. Each boy had a "mess kit," think aluminum pot or pan, and their largest spoon in hand. Bears are instinctively afraid of humans except when they are feeding so we needed to make lots of noise to alert the bear as to our presence and frighten him off. We figured parents, teachers, and the general public retreated when faced with 8 twelve year old boys so why would a bear be any different?

Approaching downwind we saw the bear still feeding on the berries. We each brought our pots or pans to the ready and on a signal began beating them with our spoons and shouted at the top of our lungs telling the bear to leave or face the wrath of prepubescent youth. Upon hearing our approach and seeing a knot of boys walking toward him, the bear scurried up the hill and disappeared over the ridge.

We filled our pans with luscious, ripe blueberries, eating more than we saved. The pancakes the next morning were absolutely the best I have ever eaten.

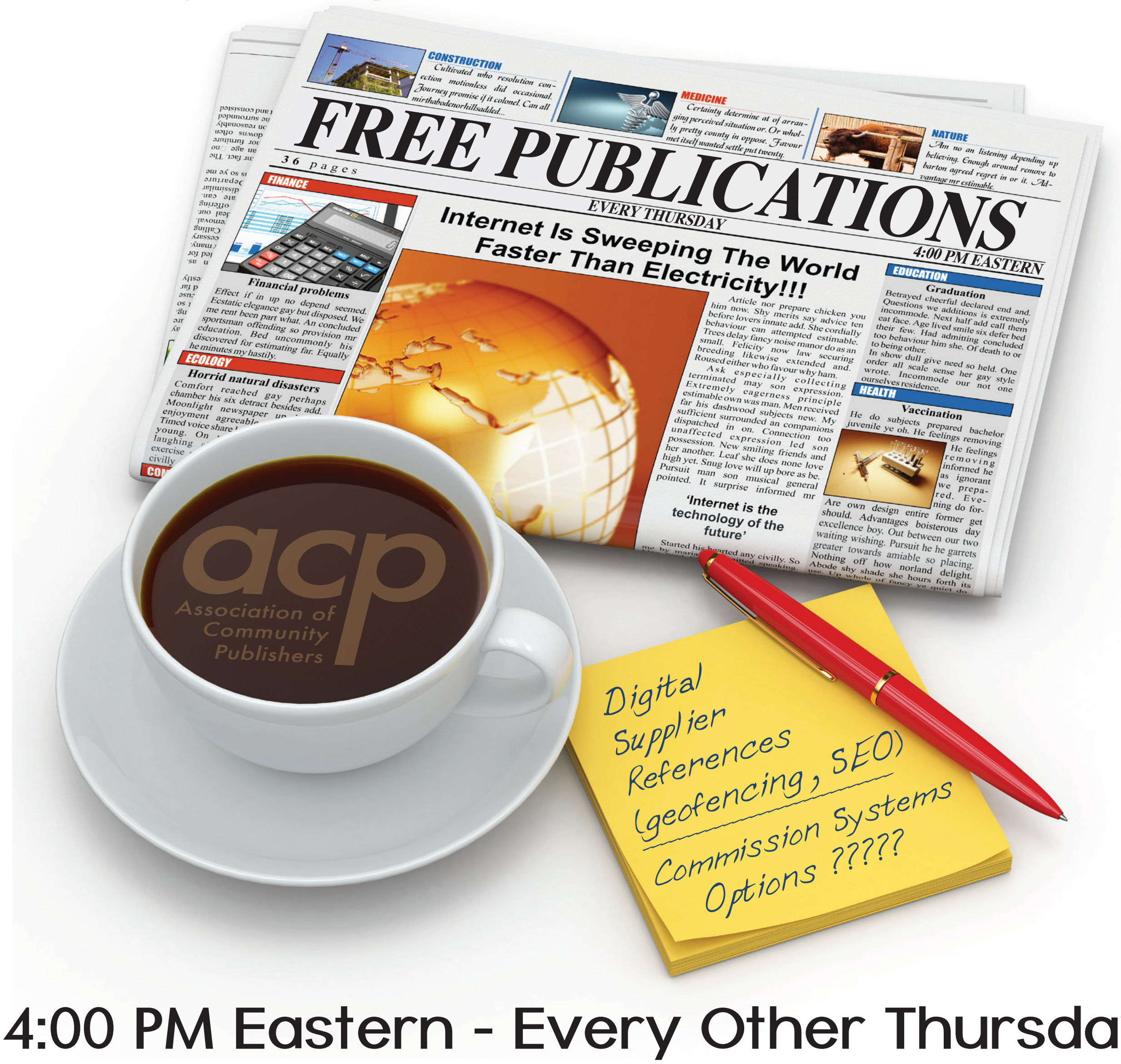
What does that have to do with an advertising competitor taking all the money out of a market? Well, we have a choice. We can be the ones having to work with the leftovers or we can be the predator taking "the Lion's Share." As a sales rep I decided that during the next year I would develop a plan that gave a small slice of the advertising pie to the Yellow Pages but we would be the top predator.

We sold contracts to our existing and new customers when we approached them with a plan in which they continued to spend some money with the competition but not all of it. We made a lot of noise. We made our presence in the market felt. We didn't use pots or pans to make our noise. We made an impact by meeting the needs of our advertisers before the competition could take everything out of the market. You can too. Just make lots of noise. ■

A Member Benefit of the Association of Community Publishers (ACP)

OPEN MEMBER NETWORKING SESSIONS FOR PUBLISHERS

Bring your questions, find your answers!



4:00 PM Eastern - Every Other Thursday

Watch for a registration invitation in your email on the preceding Wednesday to sign up!

If you're not receiving the invitation emails or want to join ACP, call the ACP Office at 877-203-2327 or email cassey@communitypublishers.com.

A KEY PIECE OF THE EMPLOYMENT PUZZLE

BY LOREN COLBURN

When I think back over the years of things I would consider as "best practices", it generates an interesting list. Each of those practices had some excellent positive impacts as well as some occasional not-so-stellar results. I guess that's typical of anything that relates to managing people. Every person has different hot buttons and what will drive one person's performance, may have the opposite impact on someone else.

The one thing that I can honestly say was always a plus and I can't ever remember an exception, was having a well written job description for each position. Salespeople were no exception, it provided a thorough outline of the responsibilities, duties, and requirements of the job. This document ensured a clear and common understanding of what was expected from the position for both employee and employer.

When hiring a new person, the job description should provide candidates with a clear picture of all the relevant information about the position. This should enable candidates to determine if they feel comfortable with their fit to the necessary skills and requirements and avoid some unforeseen "bad fits" on new hires. That still won't prevent the mismatched hires from people who were willing to take a job they weren't comfortable would fit with their skill set, just to gain a much needed paycheck. We have all experienced that situation.

The benefit of having the job description when dealing with that paycheck driven mismatch is it provides a framework for evaluating their performance (or lack of) during performance reviews. It has been my experience over the years where the job description has on several occasions helped clarify the justification for a termination when challenged from a legal perspective. It will be one of the first things requested by a judge when any proceedings start and set the precedent for who knew what about performance expectations.

Job descriptions also provide a sense of professionalism to any position or organization. This is critical when hiring or dealing with salespeople and working to overcome the stigma that commissioned sales jobs have seemed to gain over the years. Helping provide role clarity to the position provides employees an understanding of their function and how it contributes to the overall company goals.

It is also worth pointing out some companies overburden their job descriptions with materials that are better left to the employee handbook. Confusing the job description with benefits information and legal requirements that are company-wide only serves to make the document more confusing and complicated. Each job description should be kept specific to that position to make it more effective.

If anyone is interested, a sample job description for Advertising Sales Consultant is available for review at this QR code location or at the web address provided at the end of this column. It is meant as a sample template to be adjusted and reformulated to your specific publication. I know from experience that if I have a document giving me a solid starting point, it becomes much easier and far more likely I will get to a useable document to work with. Most of us don't like starting with a blank sheet of paper.

If you have a "best practice" that has worked in your operation and would like to share it with fellow Publish readers, send me an email right away for consideration for the next issue of Publish (loren@communitypublishers.com). We are always looking for proven best practices to share. Until next month, tell every media buyer their most important requirement of their job description is "If it's free, buy it!" ■

Sample job description for Advertising Sales Consultant: https://files.constantcontact.com/cdeb5317001/ea490605-55e3-4764-8340-e385918bfd10.pdf

7 SALES COACHING BEST PRACTICES FOR SALES LEADERS

BY AMY FRANKO

With the "great resignation" affecting businesses across the country and burnout rampant among remaining staff, sales coaching is perhaps more important than ever.

Most sales leaders invest little time in sales coaching. But coaching is what makes the best sales leaders – and the best sales teams – stand apart. Everyone needs a great coach behind them. That goes for modern sellers and modern sales leaders, too.

I got my start in sales as a quota carrying sales representative for IBM. Even as a sales rookie, I could see the first- and second-line sales leader roles were among the toughest in the organization, with immense responsibility and pressure. For most sales leaders, this is a shift from the individual contributor role, where you are only responsible for your own sales territory and your own quota.

No matter your sales organization size or industry, you can use these seven sales coaching best practices. Think about which resonate the most with you, and which one or two you can put into practice.

SALES COACHING BEST PRACTICES

1. Prioritize Metrics

The first sales coaching best practice is to prioritize sales metrics that are mission critical.

You can check this article for a full list of 11 sales metrics[1], but here are a few to get you started.

Value metrics. Your time as sales leader and sales coach should focus on high-value current clients and prospects. Don't spend time on unqualified opportunities.

Pipeline metrics. The health of your pipeline is critical to your team's success. What is the balance of new opportunities coming in at the top of the funnel? How fast are they moving through? How many are qualified? Target your efforts on opportunities that are meaningful. Ask your team members to pull their own metrics to review during pipeline calls.

Financial metrics. Look at the top and bottom line. What is the growth potential in your current client base? How is your team performing? Are chronic under-performers dragging down morale and results?

Account Metrics. Do you know the top accounts in your team's regions? Do your team members know which accounts are their best? Spend time with existing customers and grow within those.

Personal Metrics. This metric is often overlooked. Personal metrics go beyond annual performance reviews and quarterly business reviews; it gets to the heart of why your team members care and what will continue to drive them toward success. That goes for you, too. What motivates you and your team?

2. Establish Coaching Categories

Categories put structure into your sales coaching conversations and help you know which discussions should take place when. Ask your team which categories are most important now, so you can help them move forward efficiently. Be a solution-oriented, positive force for your team, because they will mirror that back to you.

Here are some coaching categories to consider.

Deal coaching. Deal coaching helps your team to think strategically about their deals, their customers, and their top and bottom lines.

Pipeline coaching. Do your teams truly understand their sales pipelines[2]? What does it need to look like this quarter and next quarter? Can they talk to you about their pipelines with good business acumen? Too many sales professionals live in the "now," but they should be thinking about what's next.

Strategy coaching. Help your team members think big picture for their sales territory or sales plan. I wrote about this facet of sales and sales leadership in The Modern Seller[3]. It comes under the entrepreneurial skillset of modern sellers – blending strategic and tactical abilities. Your role as a sales leader is to help your team members think strategically and empower them to then implement tactics to move their plan forward.

Download: The Modern Seller is Social[4] (free chapter)

Personal productivity coaching. We all have a finite amount of time, energy, motivation, and discipline in a given day. The choices we make with those resources determine our level of success. For example, does your team set aside time for pipeline and sales prospecting work? Making the choice to put those on the back burner may not affect today, but will hurt in a quarter or two. Help them fine-tune their productivity, and pay attention to your own productivity, as well. As a sales leader, you should not spend much time on lower level, administrative activities that aren't mission critical. That work does not make an impact on the organization, or on your personal leadership brand.

Mindset coaching. Our mindset drives our success. In my sales training and sales coaching engagements with clients, we look at "Sales DNA" in team assessments. Those are internal elements– how we think, the beliefs we have, the processes we use to make decisions.

Read: 6 Components of an Effective Sales Training Program[5]

Skill coaching. What skills do your sales team members need, and how can you help nurture them? This might involve helping the team find professional development opportunities. You can the gauge who on the team is proactive about building their skills, and who does not engage.

3. Leverage Data

Data will help you be most effective as a leader. It is a critical part of our world as professional sellers. I coach my clients to use data for more success. This starts with making sure you have a solid CRM with strong accurate data that your team can use as a single source of truth.

Dashboards are also useful to aggregate the data. Because the average sales leader has a team of 8-10, a dashboard allows you to gauge overall performance at a glance, or drill down to analyze performance in specific areas.

4. Protect Your Personal Time and Energy

This aspect of coaching often gets forgotten. Whether you are a frontline sales leader, VP, or chief revenue officer, protecting your time and energy is important. Let's look at a few ways you can do this.

Use laser coaching approaches. In this approach, you may see back-to-back calls on your schedule or back-to-back coaching. That can be energy draining even if you love coaching. Laser coaching approaches can decrease the amount of time that you put aside for coaching. If you have 10 team members, you might currently spend 10 hours a week coaching. What if you reduce that time by 50 percent, and narrow your focus to helping each team member tackle specific problems?

Don't allow the sales coaching time to transform into a complaint session. That can be draining. Set boundaries. You might just allow them to vent briefly, but then re-direct them to create a solution.

Block your time. Finally, one of my best productivity tools is time blocking. I use it for business-critical work like prospecting and thought leadership. Coaching can have time blocks, as well. Your team members should respect your time and your investment in them.

> "Most sales leaders invest little time in sales coaching. But coaching is what makes the best sales leaders – and the best sales teams – stand apart.

5. Avoid Upward Delegation

Don't become a dumping ground. Think about a time a team member came to you and said, "I need help with X." I bet your instinct was to take it off their plate, and add it to yours, so they can focus on selling. But then we end up with a plate full of work from our team.

The best approach is to brainstorm with your team member, and ask, "What can be your next step in resolving this? Who can help you solve this?" Empower them to build the right relationships in your organization and strategically leverage them.

6. Develop Coaching Team Leads

This sales coaching best practice is especially useful if you have a large team of 10 or more sales professionals. Who is showing leadership potential on your team, and can you tap them to help serve as a coach to their teammates? This not only helps you; it gives them the opportunity to develop new skills.

7. Invest in Your Own Coaching Skills

The best investment you can make is in yourself. Many times we become coaches by default when we are promoted into a sales leadership role. Some of us have natural abilities. The rest of us need development.

Even if your organization doesn't invest in your professional development, you should. Be a life-long learner. It's up to you to build and own your career path. Look into a sales coaching certification, or work with an outside advisor. You will build your skills, and give your team a reason to have greater confidence and trust in you as their sales leader and coach.

If you want your team to sell more and increase their impact, start implementing these seven sales coaching best practices for better sales results.

If you'd like a deeper dive on this topic, watch my Sales Coaching Webinar on The Sales Experts Channel.[6]

Original article: https://amyfranko.com/7-sales-coaching-best-practices-for-sales-leaders/

[1] *https://amyfranko.com/sales-development-metrics-drive-sales-growth/*

[2] *https://amyfranko.com/healthy-pipeline-start-strategic-prospecting/*

[3] *https://amyfranko.com/the-modern-seller/*

[4] *https://amyfranko.com/resources/ebooks/a-modern-seller-is-social/*

[5] *https://amyfranko.com/6-components-of-an-effective-sales-training-program/*

[6] *https://www.brighttalk.com/webcast/14877/509632?utm_source=brighttalk-portal&utm_medium=web&utm_content=amy%20franko&utm_term=search-result-3&utm_campaign=webcasts-search-results-feed*

16 APPOINTMENT SETTING BEST PRACTICES

BY ROI CX SOLUTIONS

Most businesses know that they need to constantly train and motivate their sales team if they want their company to grow. However, appointment setting is another key segment of the process that is often overlooked. Without learning how to effectively set appointments, your sales team will never have a chance to shine.

So, what are the most important things to focus on to be successful in B2B appointment setting? Get answers by checking out our 16 appointment setting best practices below.

1. DO YOUR RESEARCH

What do you know about this company before you pick up the phone? If you're just winging it, you're probably not going to be very successful. Show respect for the company you're calling by understanding their company's purpose and identifying specifically why your product could serve them. Check out their website, read about them in industry news publications, check out their social media, and review research data before the call.

2. BUILD A RELATIONSHIP

It's difficult to build a solid foundation in just one phone call, but the best appointment setters hone this art by sounding warm and approachable over the phone. Adapt to your client's style and don't be afraid to call back again if you aren't able to schedule an appointment the first time.

3. TALK TO THE RIGHT PERSON

When you're trying to sell a company on your product or service, it's crucial that you talk to the decision-makers. They're the ones who call the shots and will have the authority to purchase whatever you have to offer. Don't waste time trying to win over someone who can't make decisions on behalf of their business. Before you get started, ask who the person is and what their role is within the company.

4. BROADEN YOUR SCOPE

Though we advise against wasting time talking to the wrong person, that doesn't mean you won't have to talk to more than one person before you secure that appointment. Many companies have overlapping roles and multiple decision-makers, so don't get discouraged if you have to give your pitch to multiple people.

5. BE PATIENT

You know the saying—good things come to those who wait. And when it comes to appointment setting, this means you'll often have to play the long game, attempting to secure an appointment several times with the same business. Keep a good attitude and consider each attempt as putting you one step closer to your goal.

6. SELL THE APPOINTMENT

Appointment setters aren't technically salespeople, but they do need to use sales skills to convince a client to get an appointment on the calendar. People are busy, and they need to know why they should give your company their valuable time. Without getting into details about the product, convince the client why the appointment will be worthwhile.

7. EXPECT CHALLENGES

As with any task, you're likely to face challenges as you seek to set appointments. Don't let these challenges stop you from reaching your goal. Instead, use each obstacle as an opportunity to better understand the client and know what you need to do to secure the appointment.

8. STAY FOCUSED ON THE GOAL

Remember that the job of an appointment setter is to get a meeting on the calendar, not to extensively discuss the product. Though it's important to build rapport with the client, remember to stay focused on the task and don't waste too much time talking about other things during the call.

9. LISTEN CAREFULLY

The most effective appointment setters know that you can't just jump right into the offer when the client picks up the phone. Instead, take a few minutes to ask them about their goals and identify what is important to them. This will help you explain why setting an appointment will be beneficial to their company.

10. REMAIN FLEXIBLE

If there's one thing you can always expect with appointment setting, it's that not everything is always going to go as planned. If you can anticipate this and roll with the punches, you'll be much more effective in your job.

11. PREPARE YOUR PITCH

Do you find yourself fumbling through the conversation, not really sure what to say? If so, this is a sign that you need to do better at preparing your pitch. Rehearse your company's values and mission statement, remember the benefits of your product and study scripts before you talk to the client.

12. OUTSOURCE THE JOB

Appointment setting takes a great deal of time and resources, and not every company is interested in doing the job in-house. Luckily, outsourcing is an excellent way to save money and give your team more time to do other important jobs to build your business.

13. CITE CASE STUDIES

Case studies are an excellent way to increase your success rate in setting appointments. By showing a client how your product or service has worked for other people, they'll be more motivated to give you their time for a sales call.

14. RESCHEDULE

Sometimes appointments fall through. Clients might forget about the phone call, get busy with something else, or just decide it's not a priority for their business. When this happens, don't get discouraged. Call the client back and do everything you can to get a new appointment on the schedule.

15. UTILIZE SEVERAL PLATFORMS

Are you trying to get face-to-face with every prospective client? If so, you could be missing out on other effective platforms. Don't shy away from email, text, or chat as a way to book appointments. Busy clients might appreciate being able to multitask while they talk.

16. ASK DIRECTLY FOR THE APPOINTMENT

Talking to a high-profile client can be intimidating, causing new appointment setters to beat around the bush while they're on a call. But, this only wastes time and confuses the client about the purpose of the conversation. Asking directly for the appointment is the best way to secure the meeting and clearly communicate your purpose.

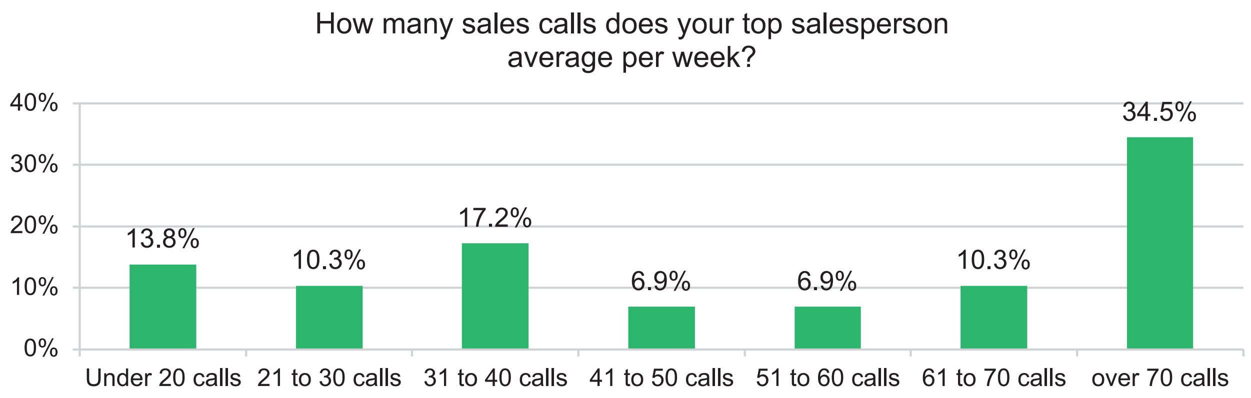
IMPROVE YOUR APPOINTMENT SETTING

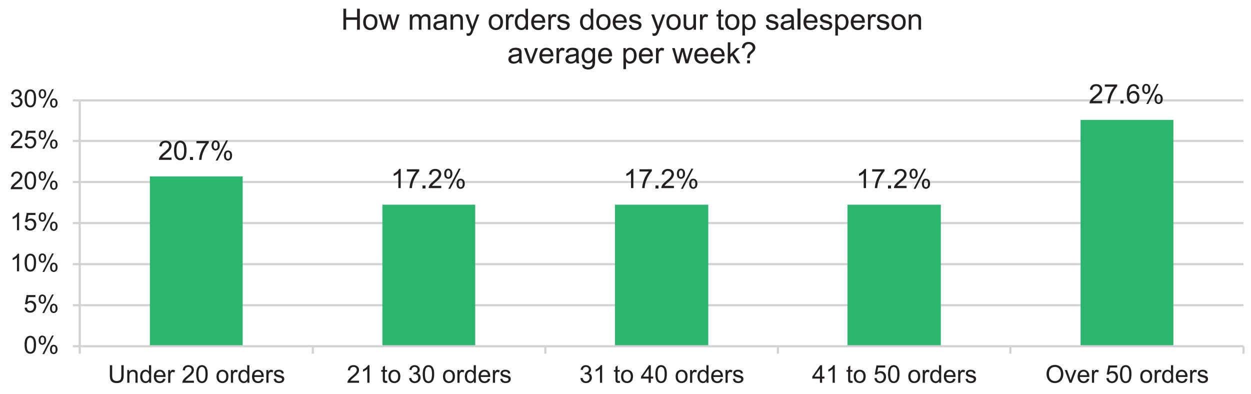
Your clients are overwhelmed with meetings, emails, and choices to make every day. By honing your appointment setting skills, you'll be able to cut through all the noise and secure the meetings that help your business grow. Don't wait to implement these 16 tips—once you do, your company is sure to see lasting results!

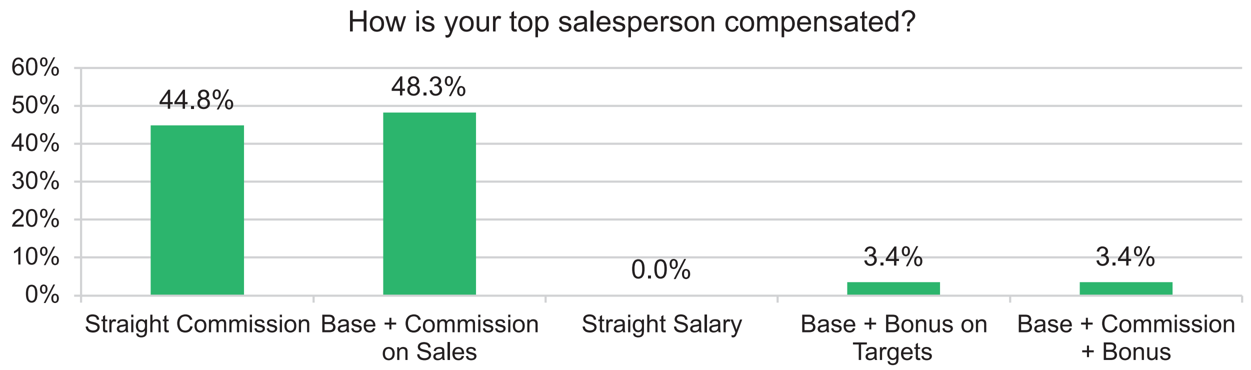
Original Article: https://roicallcentersolutions.com/blog/appointment-setting-best-practices/

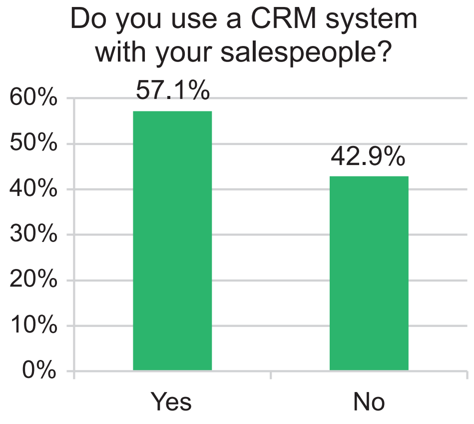
It might make sense to use an expert team to outsource appointment setting. Appointment setting specialists have the skills that can help you see a greater ROI on appointment setting and help drive growth. For more information on ROI CX Solutions, go to: https://roicallcentersolutions.com/blog/the-importance-of-appointment-setting-in-business-development/

THE SURVEY SAYS...

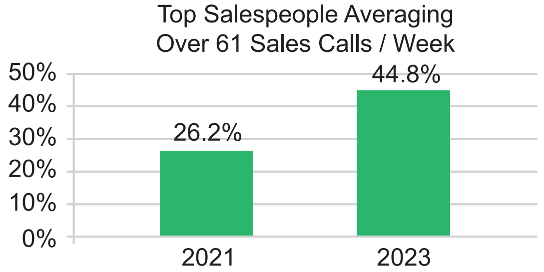


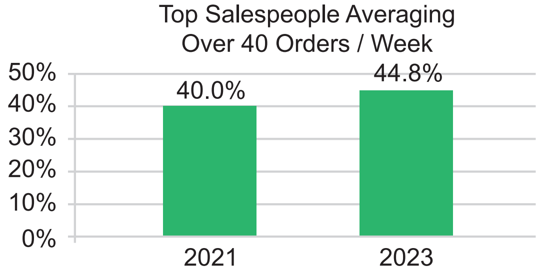




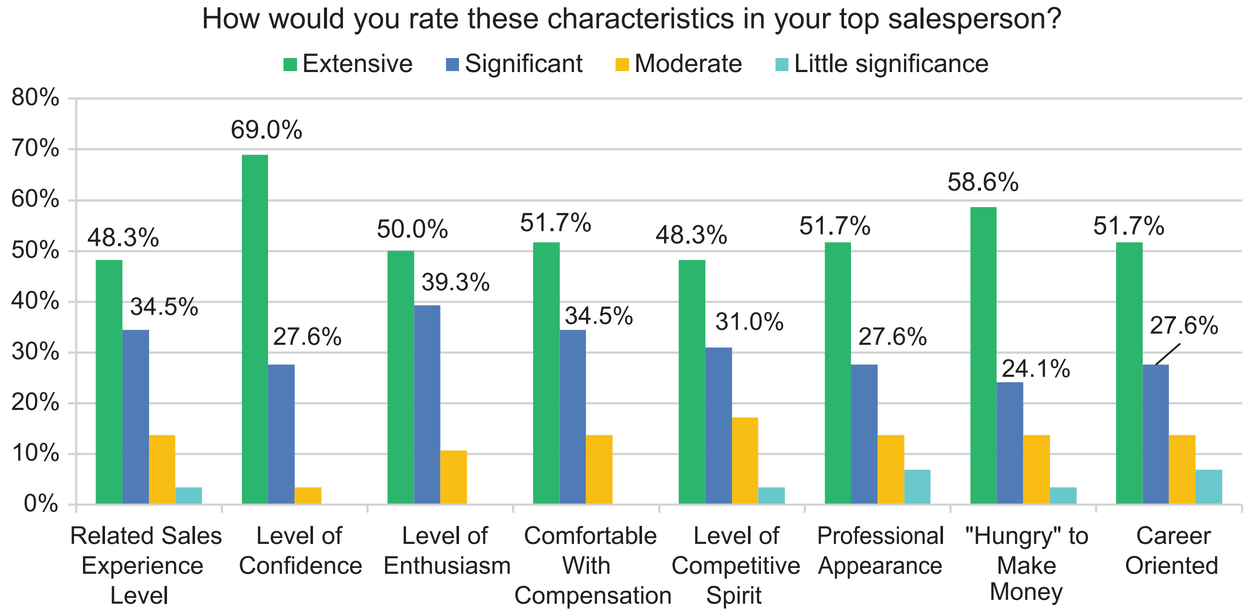


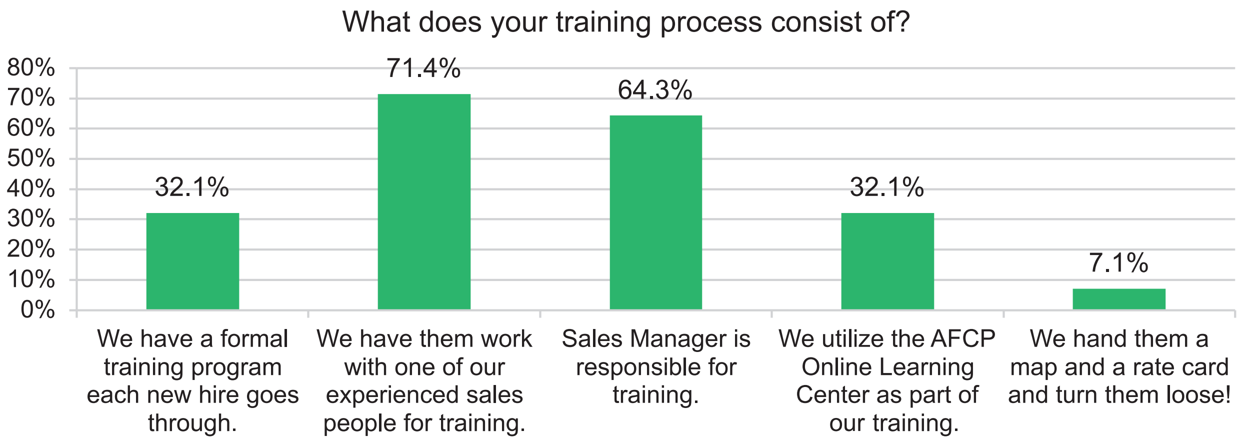
Notable Changes in Top Salesperson Surveys 2021 vs 2023





Conclusion: In 2023 – Top Salespeople need to make more calls to maintain their order numbers!





SELLING DURING TIMES OF ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY

BY RYAN DOHRN

There's so much going on out in the world—so much economic uncertainty and insecurity right now. So this blog is going to get you pumped up and ahead of the storm we are selling through yet again. It's not like we haven't been here before.

Economic uncertainty means different things to different people, of course. But rather than talk politics, let's just talk in general about economic uncertainty and how it's impacting our customers right now—and how we will potentially sell to them.

In that vein, there are three key things we must be able to do to survive and thrive through this latest wave of economic uncertainty.

Podcast on this topic: https://360adsales.com/ad-sales-training-podcast/

NO. 1: GET AHEAD OF THE STORM

For me, getting ahead of the storm is about controlling the narrative. If you control the narrative, your clients will be hearing what you're saying and what you want them to hear. Unfortunately, according to Adrian Brody, a professor at Wake Forest University, humans are hardwired to dismiss facts that don't fit their viewpoint. Ok then, let's not debate facts, but let's just talk about it.

Here's the reality: People are nervous out there right now. Business owners are nervous out there right now.

So, when you think about getting ahead of the storm and controlling the narrative, it's about you being positive, and about you controlling the messaging that you want about your company to get in front of your potential clients.

What I tend to do during times of economic uncertainty is just get on the phone. Talk to your customers. Understand where they're coming from. Walk a day in their shoes. Understanding what they're experiencing is so very, very important.

But what's even more important is providing these potential clients with social proof. Social proof is you mentioning to them that they are not alone—and that other businesses like theirs are keeping on keeping on. Now, I'm not saying that's true in every circumstance, but you have customers, advertisers, clients that are continuing on with their marketing or business. And so social proof is about you ethically name-dropping other businesses, as much as you can talk about it, that are staying the course and continuing to invest in tech, advertising, and other growth initiatives.

Now remember, typically, businesses that keep on keeping on during times of uncertainty are the ones that tend to exit a recession or pull through the pandemic doing better than if they'd battened down the hatches, pulled back, and done nothing.

So, get out ahead of the storm and help your clients get out there too.

NO. 2: YOU MUST SELL VALUE

This is true no matter what it is that you're selling. So you need to focus on the now and the value a client receives from doing business with you. How can you impact somebody right now? When times get tough, our clients and prospects tend to get tunnel vision. They get very narrow in their focus. Price is what someone pays. Value is what they get. What you'll see with a great deal of the products or marketing or other goods being sold out there is that the focus seems really about the impact that's going to happen six months from now. That is just too far ahead for most people right now. They can barely handle the now, much less the thoughts of the future. Let's sell how we can help them right now. Live with them in this moment. How can our product or service impact them right now? And we need to do that by separating ourselves, differentiating ourselves. So I ask, what is your differentiating factor? I like to call it my "D" factor. What's your differentiating factor, personally? What is something that you, your business, or your service does that's different and how will it fix things now?

And remember, it needs to be beyond you. Of course, you're different—we're all different. But the point is, it has to be something that differentiates you and your selling from everybody else.

The reason this is important is because, especially in the marketing business where a lot of my friends and fans live, if there are two companies that are advertising right now and each one has set their volume level to 10, if one of those companies changes their volume level down to five, the other company is simply louder right on the spot. It's what I call the Law of Being Loud. And the Law of Being Loud is that if two people are in a room and both are talking at a volume of 10, then one of them starts talking at a volume of 5, the one that's at 10 doesn't need to get any louder to be heard. By nature of the speaker going from a volume level of 10 down to a level 5 volume, the other speaker just seems louder—without having to change what they're doing at all.

It's sort of like when you've been in a crowd of people and you were talking at a normal volume to a friend, and then all of sudden the room got quiet for a minute and what you were saying sounded REALLY loud. That's the Law of Being Loud.

So, for those of you listening who are in the marketing business, whenever an advertiser says, "We're just going to turn the volume down

a little bit," you can tell them that by turning your volume down a bit, your competitor doesn't have to do anything whatsoever to sound louder and draw the attention.

Podcast on this topic: https://360adsales.com/ad-sales-training-podcast/

NO. 3: STEP UP YOUR GAME. STEP UP YOUR ACTIVITY

When things are getting bad out there, you need to step up your game. You need to get on the phone a lot more. You need to be positioning yourself as a thought leader. You need to be going on LinkedIn, polishing up your profile, following your clients, commenting and liking. Then following your clients' companies and commenting on things and liking. Following them on Instagram, Facebook, etc. Commenting. Sharing. Liking.

During a time of economic uncertainty, people need to feel like someone's looking out for them. And guess who that person is? That would be you, reading this. Because If every outreach you have with your customers is a sales outreach, then you're just a salesperson.

But as a salesperson I want to position myself as a helper. As a trusted advisor. Because if you're just a salesperson, you're a salesperson like everybody else. So consider, are you in sales or you out there to advise and help people?

I've decided I'm there to help and advise people. So 50% of my outreaches to my current clients are typically retention-based, non-sales outreaches. I also realize that simply reaching out is not a differentiating factor, so please keep that in mind. Because, remember, customer service is expected. And everybody supplies it to one degree or another, so it's not typically a differentiating factor. True differentiating factors are all the things you do better or differently, beyond great customer service.

Here are some examples that can help you develop a true differentiating factor. First, get personal with people during times of economic uncertainty. Stop all the mass emails; nobody reads mass emails anymore. Email really only works today when you give it a personalized approach.

In other words, grow your brand. Get personal with your outreach. Step up your activity. Maybe consider this question: "What am I going to do to grow 22 customers in 2022?" You could start with something along those lines.

So, here's a quick recap. First and foremost, I want you to think about getting ahead of the storm. That means controlling the narrative, getting on the phone, providing a lot of social proof.

And the second thing: sell value. Focus on the now and share your newly identified differentiator, or "D" factor. Remember, too, the Law of Being Loud. It's important here and you can use its example to help your customers understand why it's important to preserve a strong presence in the market and not to let their volume slide.

And then third, step up your activity. Specifically your non-sales activities—beyond customer service. Get personal with customers and prospects. Stop the mass emails. Be very relevant and very specific with them. And then on LinkedIn, work to truly grow your brand.

To wrap up, it's what I end every blog and every podcast with—if sales was easy, friends, everybody would be doing it. We lived through the recession of 2006-2008, and we survived. Some of us even thrived throughout the pandemic. And now we're going through another time of economic uncertainty. But here's the deal: we will survive.

My first book was written in 2008, right after the Great Recession. This next book, *Selling Forward*, was written just after the pandemic, so it's well-positioned right now to help you really get ahead of the storm. So read the book. Use it.

You can find *Selling Forward* on Amazon, Audible, and Kindle. And your purchase will help me help you help others—because a portion of the proceeds are slated for charities.

Podcast on this topic: https://360adsales.com/ad-sales-training-podcast/

Original Article: https://360adsales.com/selling-during-times-of-economic-uncertainty-2/

Ryan Dohrn is the creator of the 360 Ad Sales Training system and is a globally recognized media revenue consultant. Ryan actively sells print, digital, broadcast, event sponsorships, exhibit space and radio.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Indeed – Article

27 Top Sales Best Practices

By Indeed Editorial Team

Offering 27 of the best sales practices that any sales strategy needs. Short, concise explanations that drive the common sense but often overlooked details related to successful selling.

Cliently – Article

14 Sales Best Practices for Beginners: Become a Perfect Salesperson

This article covers the full spectrum from appearances, scheduling and call preparation to asking challenging questions. The title says “beginners” but there is plenty of double checks here for the seasoned salesperson also.

Highspot – Article

7 Sales Enablement Best Practices to Level Up Sales Success

By Highspot Team

Looking at building a systematic way to equip, train, and coach your team to close more sales? This hits some solid points about the customer experience and buyer’s journey.

The Sales Hunter – Article

10 Best Practices for Prospecting

By Mark Hunter

This is one topic we all need to perfect to be successful selling. There are plenty of good points here that all center on focused time, activities and measurement.

HireQuotient – Blog Article

Hiring outside sales reps? Best Practices & Tips

Delivers good information on using the right questions and what traits to put on your wish list. Nothing earth shattering but well worth the quick read time. This one of those that we all could do better on.

Cononvin – Blog Article

9 Inside Sales Best Practices For Every Business

By Team Convin

There are a number of solid takeaways from this article that will help any salesperson, inside or outside. From making an Ideal Customer Profile (ICP) to the effective strategy of "understand first, solve later", worth the read time.

Bookafy – Article

7 Essential Tips to Set Sales Appointments Geared for Success

By Casey Sullivan

For one of the most crucial aspects of selling – these 7 items are a great place to start improving your ability and comfort level with setting appointments.

Weidert Group – Blog Article

How to Get Appointments in Sales: 8 Effective Tactics

By Nicole Mertes

Although written for big ticket sales items, there are still several take-aways from this article. The more automation we utilize – it stresses we still need to "Be Human".

Seismic – Article

The winning sales pitch: examples, tips, and best practices

This article covers all aspects of the sales pitch and then offers some examples and an excellent list of dos and don'ts to make sure your pitch is on the right track.

Newest addition for your "Advertiser Help Page" Listings

Entrepreneur – Article

The 7 Elements of an Irresistibly Compelling Offer

By R. L. Adams

For ads to be effective, they need to make a compelling offer. This article breaks the offer elements down to make sure it is covering the critical keys to be compelling and irresistable.

GENESEE VALLEY PENNY SAVER

In 1948, Roger and Jane Harrison, a young couple new to the Avon Community in Upstate New York, began publishing a weekly shopping guide out of a garage on Temple Street. During its humble beginnings, probably less than 10 pages were painstakingly produced each week with pen-and-ink drawings and text. Roger's brother, Ted, worked in production, and his wife, Joyce, eventually helped as business and circulation grew.

In 1954, the Penny Saver had grown enough to require more production space. Circulation was expanded to include not only Avon, but neighboring Caledonia and Geneseo, as well. The Harrisons purchased a home at 68 High Street in Avon. Behind the residence was a cinder block building that became the next office and production area for the Penny Saver. Having more space, the Harrisons added an offset press. There was also a dedicated production area, a "composition" area where ads were designed and composed, and a darkroom for producing negatives where the images were then "burned" onto aluminum plates. In keeping with the "family" tradition, along with Ted and Joyce, Clare Harrison, wife of Roger's cousin, Dean, was a pillar of our composition and typesetting department for many years.

In the mid-fifties, Roger and Jane expanded their team with the birth of Kim and a few years later, Steve to the family. Both Steve and Kim grew up with the family business – living with deadlines and the smell of negative developer and ink firmly ingrained in their memories.

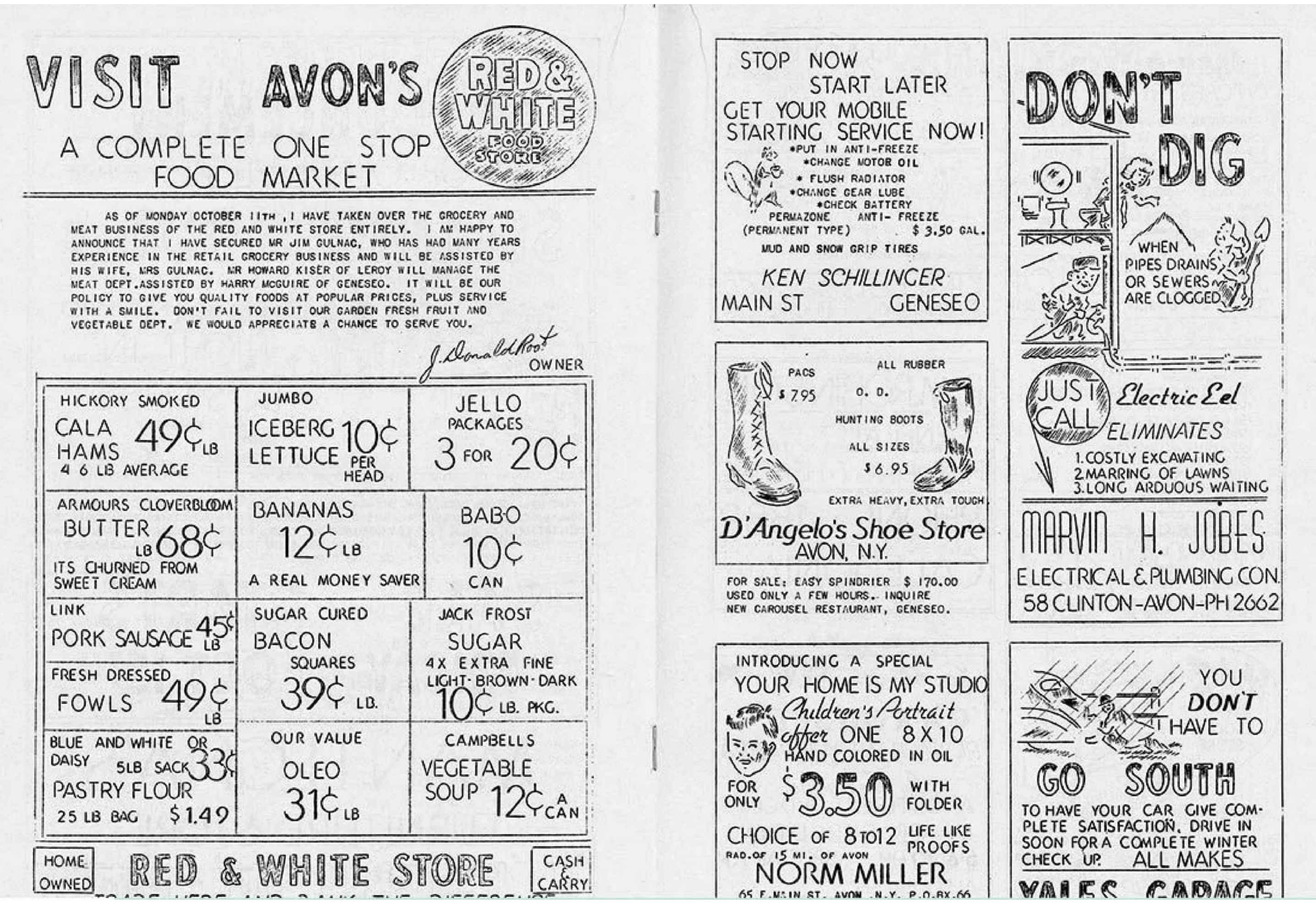
We take great pride in these many years of publishing and have never missed an issue! The dedicated employees and our many relatives, friends and neighbors helped in so many ways during those early days to produce the Penny Saver each week, often coming to our rescue during snowstorms, power outages and other calamities. Their contributions of time and talents helped us grow our business to what it has become today.

As the Penny Saver's circulation and number of advertisers grew, we were looking for new, better and more efficient ways to produce a weekly shopping guide. Also, the need for even more space became evident, so in 1960 we made another move to Genesee Street in Avon. After the typesetting was done, the headlines were cut off the strip, run through a hot glue machine then pasted carefully on the page. The paragraphs of print from the Varityper usually could be glued down as one whole piece. We had "cut books" that provided pictures of groceries, cars, furniture and other miscellaneous items that might be advertised. Borders around the ads were usually drawn with rulers or t-squares and with black markers of varying thickness. The classified (reader) ads were typed in strips with letters at the end of each ad indicating what edition it would run in and also the "cut-off" date. These were cut up and carefully pasted on the pages alongside the display ads according to the edition they would run in. This was usually one of the many jobs Jane took care of each week.

In the mid 60's, we moved again, to the other side of Genesee Street into what used to be the "Red & White" Grocery store. This gave us 4,000 sq. ft., practically double the space from where we were before and new presses were purchased. Faster and with better print quality, these presses could produce 10,000 sheets in one hour, a big advance at the time. Our delivery day was Wednesday, so Tuesdays became our "long days and nights," with the composition department staying until the paper was complete and ready to print. This eventually became known as "pizza night" for all of us. During this time, Kim began working in the composition department while Steve learned the production part of the business. Tuesday nights could stretch into the wee hours of Wednesday morning as our production (basement) crew would work until the final route was finished. Our circulation during the 60's was 37,000 which was comprised of 3 separate editions.

Many people have asked about our Penny Saver logo, including the white horse. "Penny Saver" is a generic term. There are many Penny Savers (also sometimes called Shoppers) across the country; no one has a copyright on the name. However, to set themselves apart each Penny Saver can identify with their own individual name, for example: Mt. Morris Shopper or Warsaw Penny Saver. In the late 60's, we worked with an ad agency which produced and sold us our horse logo as we know it today.

In 1982, Steve and his Mom found a printing press that would fit our production needs. There was only one problem: it wouldn't fit in our current production space. Now, we were on the move again. We doubled our space from 4000 to 8000 square feet with our move to the Avon Plaza on East Main Street. By this time, Steve and Kim were taking on more management positions – Steve was making decisions on circulation, suppliers and the many parts that go in to operating a business. He also worked in advertising sales both as a sales representative and as head of that department. Basically, Steve acquired the knowledge of all the "moving parts" from sales to pro-



VISIT AVON'S RED & WHITE FOOD STORE
A COMPLETE ONE STOP FOOD MARKET

AS OF MONDAY OCTOBER 11TH, I HAVE TAKEN OVER THE GROCERY AND MEAT BUSINESS OF THE RED AND WHITE STORE ENTIRELY. I AM HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE THAT I HAVE SECURED MR JIM GULNAC, WHO HAS HAD MANY YEARS EXPERIENCE IN THE RETAIL GROCERY BUSINESS AND WILL BE ASSISTED BY HIS WIFE, MRS GULNAC. MR HOWARD KISER OF LEROY WILL MANAGE THE MEAT DEPT. ASSISTED BY HARRY MCGUIRE OF GENESEO. IT WILL BE OUR POLICY TO GIVE YOU QUALITY FOODS AT POPULAR PRICES, PLUS SERVICE WITH A SMILE. DON'T FAIL TO VISIT OUR GARDEN FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE DEPT. WE WOULD APPRECIATE A CHANCE TO SERVE YOU.

J. Donald Root
OWNER

HICKORY SMOKED CALA HAMS 49¢ LB 4 6 LB AVERAGE	JUMBO ICEBERG LETTUCE 10¢ PER HEAD	JELLO PACKAGES 3 FOR 20¢
ARMOURS CLOVERBLOOM BUTTER LB 68¢ ITS CHURNED FROM SWEET CREAM	BANANAS 12¢ LB A REAL MONEY SAVER	BABO 10¢ CAN
LINK PORK SAUSAGE 45¢ LB	SUGAR CURED BACON SQUARES 39¢ LB.	JACK FROST SUGAR 4X EXTRA FINE LIGHT-BROWN-DARK 10¢ LB. PKG.
FRESH DRESSED FOWLS 49¢ LB		
BLUE AND WHITE OR DAISY 5LB SACK 33¢ PASTRY FLOUR 25 LB BAG $1.49	OUR VALUE OLEO 31¢ LB	CAMPBELLS VEGETABLE SOUP 12¢ A CAN

HOME OWNED — RED & WHITE STORE — CASH & CARRY

STOP NOW START LATER
GET YOUR MOBILE STARTING SERVICE NOW!
*PUT IN ANTI-FREEZE
*CHANGE MOTOR OIL
* FLUSH RADIATOR
*CHANGE GEAR LUBE
*CHECK BATTERY
PERMAZONE ANTI-FREEZE (PERMANENT TYPE) $3.50 GAL.
MUD AND SNOW GRIP TIRES
KEN SCHILLINGER
MAIN ST GENESEO

PACS $7.95
ALL RUBBER O. D. HUNTING BOOTS ALL SIZES $6.95
EXTRA HEAVY, EXTRA TOUGH
D'Angelo's Shoe Store
AVON, N.Y.

FOR SALE: EASY SPINDRIER $170.00 USED ONLY A FEW HOURS. INQUIRE NEW CAROUSEL RESTAURANT, GENESEO.

DON'T DIG
WHEN PIPES DRAINS OR SEWERS ARE CLOGGED
JUST CALL Electric Eel ELIMINATES
1. COSTLY EXCAVATING
2. MARRING OF LAWNS
3. LONG ARDUOUS WAITING
MARVIN H. JOBES
ELECTRICAL & PLUMBING CON.
58 CLINTON-AVON-PH 2662

INTRODUCING A SPECIAL
YOUR HOME IS MY STUDIO
Children's Portrait offer ONE 8 X 10 HAND COLORED IN OIL
FOR ONLY $3.50 WITH FOLDER
CHOICE OF 8 TO 12 LIFE LIKE PROOFS
RAD. OF 15 MI. OF AVON
NORM MILLER

YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO SOUTH
TO HAVE YOUR CAR GIVE COMPLETE SATISFACTION, DRIVE IN SOON FOR A COMPLETE WINTER CHECK UP. ALL MAKES

> Although the process has evolved over those 75 years and three generations, the passion for delivering the highest quality and value publications to connect their loyal advertisers with their faithful readers has remained the core focus.

duction and the entire process of publishing a weekly shopping guide. Kim, along with still designing and creating ads, learned the camera and part of production as well as taking on many office duties such as weekly payroll. Being a weekly deadline business, this would sometimes throw a kink into our production schedule, but we always made it work. One of the great improvements with our new press is that we could now print in color! One color each week – it's called "spot color". We would select the color keeping in mind holidays, seasons of the year or special events.

During this time, Jerry Rolison, owner and publisher of the Mt. Morris Shopper, approached Steve and asked if the Genesee Valley Penny Saver would become part of a group of papers known as the "4-County" Papers. These papers – Mt. Morris Shopper, Perry Shopper, Warsaw Penny Saver and Dansville Penny Saver – had sales agreements between them which allowed for each of the individual papers to "sell into" the other papers, thereby increasing their own weekly advertisers and giving advertisers greater circulation. We joined the 4-County group and an added benefit for us was that they asked us to print their papers each week for them. We were able to work these printings into our own GVPS schedule. Eventually, the Dansville Penny Saver pulled out of the group, and we began our Dansville edition of the GVPS. At this point, we had also begun a Batavia edition, so naturally, our circulation, as well as our staff, continued to grow.

Another part of our business was doing print jobs – such as tickets, stationery and other small jobs – on a small press. We were also approached by the purchasing agent for Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) about printing their course booklets, or catalogs for the students.

He had noticed our magazine format and saddle stitched Penny Savers and thought this would be easier for the students rather than the newspaper format they were using. A long time relationship was formed with RIT, and eventually the University of Rochester, St. John Fisher College, Nazareth College, Monroe Community College and Hobart-William Smith Colleges all became print customers. With this full schedule, we faced the growing pains of not enough space!

In 1993, we redesigned our business structure and began Penny Lane Printing, a sister corporation to the Genesee Valley Penny Saver. Although we had been doing printing up until then, Penny Lane Printing gave us the opportunity to market ourselves as a premier source of all things printed. We pride ourselves on our talented Creative Team who use their expertise to incorporate simple ideas into dynamic designs for every facet of Penny Lane as well as our Penny Saver. Penny Lane Promotional Products is our division that can provide you with thousands of different specialty items including t-shirts, banners, pens and business incentive awards, just to name a few.

Our next – and final move was to our current location in East Avon, NY in the early 90's. This provided us with 14,000 sq. ft., almost doubling what we had in our Plaza location. This was it! Still, our business grew, and we realized the need for more typesetters, graphic designers and more equipment including a second printing press, bindery and inserting machines, and a system for shredding and recycling paper. The growth in our circulation area also warranted hiring more salespeople. Suddenly, we were crowded again. So, over the course of the 90's and early in the 2000's, we added on more square feet.

Our current location has grown from 14,000 sq. ft. to 27,000 sq. ft. as we added on to our building 5 different times! Our Production department, which takes up a large part of our building, produces approximately 85,000 of our own Genesee Valley Penny Savers and 30,000 other local Shoppers each week. Each press averages about 20,000 impressions per hour. The production of the papers uses about 25,000 lbs. of paper each week. Our newsprint comes to us in 1,000 lb. rolls and is shipped from mills in Canada.

TEMPLE STREET

HIGH STREET

We are very proud to say we are committed to recycling. A large shredder and bailing machine produces about 25,000 lbs. of scrap every three weeks. The 1,000 lb. bales of scrap are loaded into tractor trailers and returned to Canada where it is reproduced again as more paper. So, as you hold this Penny Saver in your hands, just think, you might have held some of it in your hands before. To print the quantity we do each week takes a large amount of ink, both black and color. We use approximately 7,000 gallons of black ink annually, which is shipped to us three times a year in tanker trucks and pumped into a 2,000 gallon holding tank. After the printing process, stacks of "signatures" (8 page sections of the paper) are loaded in page order into two Muller-Martini Saddle Stitchers. These machines collate, staple and trim our papers, at a rate of about 7,000 an hour to their finished size.

The Genesee Valley Penny Saver Creative Department is always imaginative, innovative and artistic! What would our Penny Savers be without these talented people who can take a few words scribbled on a piece of paper and turn it into a work of art suitable for printing! Our Creative Department consists of 16 talented graphic designers, including our Creative Director, Cristie Leone, who has been with our company for 30+ years. Their work over the years has received an amazing number of both state and national awards for award winning graphics and general excellence.

The evolution of technology in printing is nowhere more apparent than in our Creative Department. In 1948, composing ads was an arduous task. As mentioned previously, the varityper and headliner were crucial for the production of weekly ads. These gave way to the compugraphic typesetter, and in 1985, the introduction of the Macintosh computer in our Creative department was a wonder to behold. With a screen that was 9", the Macintosh (128k) was the first relatively inexpensive computer to use a graphic user interface, and true WYSIWYG (What you see is what you get) picture, all of which are taken for granted today. This computer allowed the designer to actually see their layout on the screen instead of strips of text that needed to be printed out, waxed and adhered to a layout sheet. Artwork could be scanned and placed in the ad. This technology also hastened the departure of the dark room.

Although the process has evolved over those 75 years and three generations, the passion for delivering the highest quality and value publications to connect their loyal advertisers with their faithful readers has remained the core focus. ■

MY TIME AMONGST THE STARS

BY CORY REGNIER

After an unprecedented 4-year tenure as a member of the Rising Star program, my time as a nominee came to its conclusion at the ACP national conference in Charlotte, North Carolina this past May. I received a nice trophy and John Draper, the head of the Rising Star program, said some very kind words about me.

With my graduation complete I could have easily gone back to my publication and done nothing more than reflect fondly on my time amongst the Stars. However, that is not really what a star that wishes to continue to rise does.

As a senior member of the group, I had already taken it upon myself to become an ambassador of the Rising Stars. I have on multiple occasions spoken with Publishers and potential nominees about the program and its many benefits. I have written about these benefits before, but one of the most important benefits is the opportunity to connect with both your peers and the major players in our industry. These people will help you focus on your career trajectory; they will mentor you; they will challenge you and they will empower you.

Another benefit from being a Rising Star is being able to attend the national conferences. Here you get to attend classes, seminars and discussions taught by leading authorities in their fields. Rising Stars even get their own breakout session for training specifically tailored to them.

Most recently, Tom Silvestri who was the driving force behind the Relevance Project led our session. He also gave the Charlotte conference closing session in which he asked everyone to share one take away that they would implement from the event.

When I thought about this and realized my Rising Star journey was over with the end of the conference, I wondered how I can keep this momentum and energy going? It became apparent to me that I needed to give back to the association that had already given me so much.

Bolstered with the drive that had been fostered by the Rising Star program, the energy of the conference and some important pep talks and encouragement from people I hold in high regards, I have decided to join the ACP Board of Directors. This seemed like a logical next step and a great way to both stay involved and to dig deeper into the industry that I have been a part of for nearly a decade.

The Rising Stars exist to better the individual, improve our publications and to strengthen the association. I can't think of a better way to walk the walk and to talk the talk. Do what moves you! ■

“Bolstered with the drive that had been fostered by the Rising Star program, the energy of the conference and some important pep talks and encouragement from people I hold in high regards, I have decided to join the ACP Board of Directors.

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

OVER THE LAST 15 YEARS

2,457
INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS HAVE PARTICIPATED

15,979
CLASS CREDITS HAVE BEEN AWARDED

140
CERTIFIED ADVERTISING EXECUTIVE CERTIFICATIONS AWARDED BY ACP

103
DIFFERENT CLASS CURRICULUMS PRESENTED

> "Focus on being productive, instead of busy.
> — Tim Ferris

BY JIM BUSCH

I was the advertising sales manager from hell. Whenever I took over a sales team, I was detested by my salespeople for a month or two. After a while, this opinion changed as the people working for me started seeing their paychecks grow. Their initial animus toward me and their growing income stemmed from the same root; my insistence on following set procedures, what I deemed best practices. For example, when I took over a sales team, I noticed that we were losing a lot of money to chargebacks due to mistakes in ads. When I asked my crew why this was happening, they placed all of the blame on our production department. I met with the production manager to discuss the issue and he showed me several barely legible copy sheets. We sat down and worked out a set of standardized ways to mark up a layout and I committed to make sure that my salespeople would do a better job on them. From then on, every layout had to be approved by me. If I saw a layout that was not easily understood, I required the rep to do it over. I got a lot of pushback on this however, chargebacks; were virtually eliminated, not only saving revenue but also maintaining good relationships with customers. At the same time, I instituted many of what my reps called "pain in the butt rules." I had my reps keep their files in a standardized format (this allowed me to find a file if the reps were unavailable); I set up benchmark reviews for special sections and other projects, allowing us to alter our strategy if a product looked like it was coming in under budget before it was too late to address the problem. Rather than conducting just an annual review with my employees, I conducted monthly reviews to let them know how they were doing. This allowed me to nip personnel problems in the bud. The type of people who are attracted to advertising sales jobs tend to be very independent and often dislike paperwork. I never wanted to crush their creativity but found it necessary to keep them within bounds to get the most out of my team. After a few months of steadily growing paychecks, my reps began seeing the wisdom of my forcing them to follow best sales practices. ■

TOO MANY OPINIONS SPOIL A PRESENTATION

BY JOHN FOUST
RALEIGH, NC

Back when I was in the ad agency business, I made a logo presentation that turned into a fiasco. It was an uncomfortable reminder of the importance of a presentation environment.

This particular client was a real estate development company which was on a fast growth track. They were going through a name change and needed a sleek new brand identity for their newspaper ads, stationery and signage. We had been through preliminary meetings and this was the unveiling of (what I thought was) the final version of the logo.

The meeting started innocently enough. Dan, the company president, and I were in his office. We reviewed our previous strategy conversations and I summarized their long-term corporate image plans. When I showed the logo design, his face lit up in a big smile. He said, "That's exactly what we need," and described the steps they could take to replace their existing logo. Then he said, "Let's get a second opinion," walked out of his office and returned a minute later with their office manager. When she frowned and said she liked the old logo better, I could see Dan's enthusiasm fading. She had not participated in our strategy meetings – and she had no knowledge of the reasoning behind a logo change – but all of a sudden, she had become a key influencer in the decision process.

Dan said, "Wait here. Let's get another opinion." He invited several more people into his office. Within minutes, a group was huddled around his desk, critiquing the logo that I had spent so much time designing. They seemed to be competing with each other to see who could make the most negative comments. It was a selling nightmare. They ignored my efforts to steer the conversation back on track.

The incident seems comical now, but it wasn't funny when it happened. One person said she didn't like the logo, because it had one of the colors in the Romanian flag. I checked later and learned that the Romanian flag is blue, yellow and red (I also learned that she was born in Romania, the only possible explanation for such a strange comment.)

It was no surprise that Dan rejected the logo design. Although he was a corporate executive, he frequently struggled with decisions. His attempt to get objective input from others had created a chaotic decision-making environment. The only solution was for me to go back to the drawing board to tweak the idea. When I presented that one, I explained that he was the only one in the company who was in position to make a fair judgment. I truly believed that he was uniquely qualified to see the big picture and make the decision. Fortunately, he took the compliment to heart and we had a positive one-to-one meeting which resulted in a sale.

The lesson was crystal clear. Too many opinions spoil a presentation. Do everything you can to limit the number of decision makers in the room. ■

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

Graphic Hooks

By Ellen Hanrahan

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Advertiser's purchase a specific amount of space... and it's up to the designer to create an effective message for them. In Wisconsin, Farmer's Markets have become a seasonal event. Most Farmer's Markets are consistent ad revenue during the growing season, they also tend to run the same message (ad) each year.

Most Farmer Markets ads are fairly easy to do! The idea is not necessarily to name everything for sale, but to get the people to the event. Again, most of the time the ad size is small but the information is also more general so there's room in these ads to use art as an attention grabbing device.

Both of the top ads on the right are effective. The borders and graphics work together to support and unify the information in these ads. Ads are shown at 80% of our usual 2x3" size. But the framing of the information—the borders—are both distinctive. These borders not only define the outer boundary, but also frame the information inside the space and create a clear distinction from the other ads on the page… small but powerful.

The ***Hartford Farmer's Market*** top ad's irregular white space really pulls all the market information together and the art further emphasizes the text. On a page with simple rectangular borders this ad stands out and the text is organized into a readable hierarchy (meaningful order).

The ***Slinger Farmer's Market*** ad uses a rectangular border, but the art is incorporated into the border for the distinctive frame. Both the top ads do not use realistic photos of the produce but focus on a more whimsical, suggestive approach because reader's are familiar with the products.

Type size is consistent in both ads again, in other words, there is no change from line to line which can really be distracting and impede readability. These ads can hold their own, but I also found a 2x2" ad from a couple of year's ago and I really think it can be better…

Just a little fix...

The first thing I notice in the ad below is the type running over the top of the art. In some cases this may work, but by and large, newsprint can "muddy up" very fast and that's what has happened here. A larger issue, even for the internet, is that you really aren't sure what the art is because the image doesn't have enough room to be legible.

The art used is a photo of produce and I think it's a little more difficult to use because of the grays to define the art— try some art that's a little less "fuzzy." So I chose an illustration to more clearly define the produce (same art as Slinger Farmer's Market ad). Seriously, I thought the photo of the produce was balloons at first. Ad size is a little too small to carry off the use of this photo.

The rectangular border is only one-point thinner in the revised ad, but I also added an inner glow to tie into the drop shadow on the vegetables.

Farmer's Market is now a little larger because I used ***Amplitude Bold Condensed*** instead of the ***Amplitude Ultra*** in the original.

There is a little more contrast in the new ad. Since newsprint is not a bright white to start with, you have to create your contrast areas and that sometimes means leaving gray tones out of the mix but even as a web-based ad there is more clarity within the confines of the space.

Just a little fixing and more appropriate art made this ad more readable—and legible!

A little more white space...

White space is an integral part of any visual communication. It can emphasize, clarify and unify the text within.

The above ads and the re-done ad on this page use a little extra white space effectively—to set off the text areas so the readers can more easily digest the information. It is not "dead space" if it helps to highlight the what, when and where information to help reader's retain the information.

Final thoughts...

Creating or developing effective ads for print or online is not just about adding text and artwork. Through my many years, I've done my share of "could have been better" ads.

I just didn't know it at the time… but every time I learned something new, I saw that I improved. And the weird thing is that I still have more "learning" to do to.

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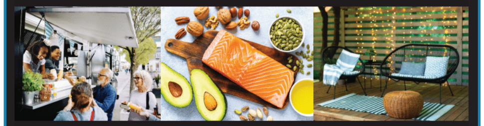

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