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COMING NEXT MONTH

The January *Publish* will take a look into the upcoming 2024 ACP conference in Norfolk. As always, we will also cover the people, information and issues that are influencing the community publishing industry.

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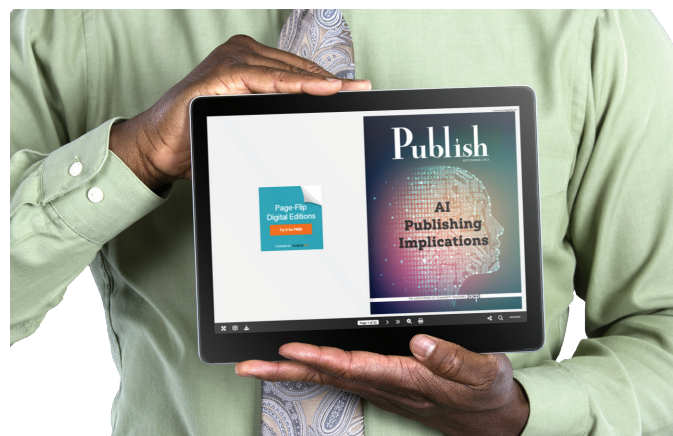
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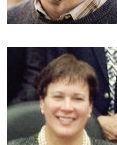
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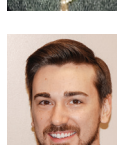


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WHAT'S IN STORE FOR '24?



BY MANUEL KARAM

Last month I wrote about the key takeaways from the ACP board strategic planning session in September. If you missed it, there's good things on the horizon for the association including a big membership push, more training, more conferences, and a balanced budget by the end of 2025. Thanks to the hard work of our staff and board, ACP is heading into the new year with a lot of positive momentum.

I'm also feeling excited about where we are as an industry right now and that has to do with recently published data. A September article in E&P summarized Borrell Associates 2024 local media outlook¹. I would recommend a read if you haven't, and it should be free online. Generally, the news was positive in that spending with local media is expected to grow 4.4% in 2024. Traditional media as a broad category is expected to hold firm at 0.4% growth. Newspaper advertising (not sure if that category averages our community papers with big dailies) is expected to decline about 4%, which sounds less good but more to come on that. Digital advertising could grow about 6% next year.

So what's the takeaway? For me, the Borell study indicates a potential resurgence in trust with local media, giving us an opportunity to be a one-stop resource for our customers. While print advertising may see a moderate decline especially in daily newspapers, marketing is still complicated for small businesses, and they need help figuring it out. Facebook certainly doesn't offer much in terms of customer service and that's where we come in.

When I first got into the industry, I remember digital was scary. But thanks to the association, both in terms of available vendors and in idea sharing, it's become much easier to understand and sell. If you've been wondering whether to add digital to your list of services, you can do it with a minimal investment, and you'll see returns quickly without sacrificing your print dollars.

Change takes time and adding digital might feel like a big undertaking. However, even baby steps will set your organization up for success in the long term. Could there be some risk to it? Sure, as with anything. But as the saying goes: "Before a turtle can take a step forward, it has to stick its neck out." ■

¹ "Borrell forecasts 'healthy' 4.4% growth in local advertising for 2024". Editor&Publisher.com, September 15, 2023, <https://www.editorandpublisher.com/stories/borrell-forecasts-healthy-44-growth-in-local-advertising-for-2024,245723>. Accessed November 1, 2023.

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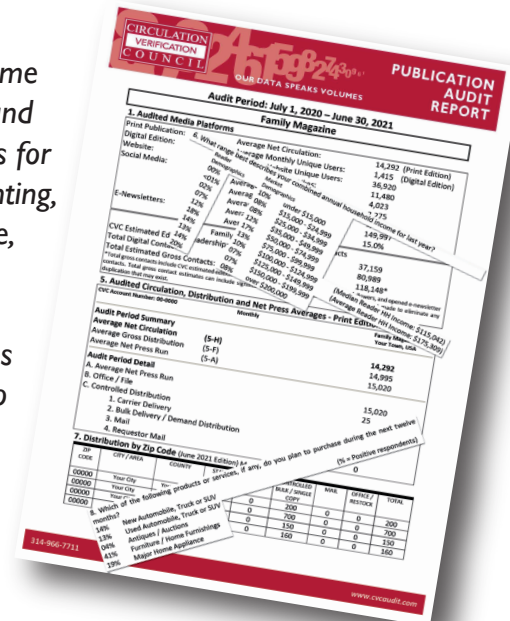
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OUR DATA SPEAKS VOLUMES



BY DOUGLAS FRY

I have 9 beautiful, kind, genius-level grandchildren. That's just the way it is. I'm sure yours are likewise endowed.

On two different occasions I had the opportunity to be with my eldest grandchildren, a boy and a girl. They wanted to do something fun but the weather, on both days, was not cooperating. We were stuck inside.

With my grandson I figured we could simply build something with the electronics kit I have. We could build a simple project like a photorefractive solar diode collection array, or something like that. However, he wasn't interested since that had been done so many times before. Each suggestion I came up with for a fun activity was met with a blank look and "Grandpa! Let's do something that's NOT lame."

One suggestion I made that apparently was not lame was that we play a game of chess. He had never played so I figured that, just maybe, I could beat the 18 year old. After explaining the fundamentals of the game we were exchanging pawns and jousting with our knights.

I was amazed at how quickly he picked up the game and how long he was interested in continuing to play. Fortunately for me, our time together ended before he could trounce me.

On the other instance my granddaughter showed the same interest in learning chess. We played several games over different visits and during our last visit she beat me.

What does this have to do with community publishing and ACP? Well...

I imagine all the people you work with are beautiful, kind, and genius-level just like my grandchildren. With so much going for them it can

be a challenge to come up with ongoing training for your sales staff. The training needs to challenge them, expand their view of things beyond themselves, and assist in critical thinking. Where can you get such content? Power Sales University.

You should use Power Sales University because it offers a comprehensive and proven sales training program that can help you close more deals and grow your business. The program is taught by experienced sales professionals who share their insights and best practices for success.

Here is what I think you and your people will gain from using Power Sales University:

- **Learn the latest sales techniques and strategies.** Power Sales University covers a wide range of sales topics, including prospecting, qualifying leads, building relationships, negotiating, and closing deals. You and your staff will learn how to use the latest sales tools and technologies, and how to adapt their sales approach to different customers and industries.
- **Gain confidence and motivation.** Power Sales University

provides you with the knowledge and skills your people need to succeed in sales. The program also helps develop the confidence and motivation to reach ones full potential.

- **Get support from a community of sales professionals.** Power Sales University participants have access to a community of other sales professionals who can offer support and advice. Members can network with each other, share experiences, and learn from each other's successes.

Let's say one of your staff members is struggling to close deals with new advertisers. They decide to watch the Power Sales University course "How to Close More Deals." In the course, they learn how to identify and qualify leads, build relationships with potential customers, and negotiate and close deals.

Oh, and did I mention the best part? Members of ACP have access to the entire library of PSU at no charge. FREE, Nada, Zero, Zilch, Zip. If you were to purchase this resource, it would be \$1,500 per month!

You may not have time to play a game of chess but you definitely have time to register you and your staff for the best sales training in the industry. Just like watching my grandchildren learn, enjoy, and ultimately surpass the teacher you'll be amazed at how quickly your people will learn and apply that knowledge to help your advertisers get more business. Checkmate. ■



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Merry Christmas

From the Board of Directors and Staff of the
Association of Community Publishers



BY LOREN COLBURN

Looking forward to 2024 conjures up loads of interesting thoughts. It's a leap year, so we have an extra day to enjoy in 2024. It is also the Chinese year of the Wood Dragon. It's the year that comet C/2023 A3 is expected to pass close to the sun and earth providing a stellar spectacle in the October night sky. It is also an election year where the President, 34 Senate seats and all 435 voting seats in the House of Representatives will be up for election!

Those first three items I find mildly interesting, but the fourth item makes me cringe at the thought. It really bothers me that instead of feeling good about another opportunity to watch democracy play out on the world stage and spread hope and faith in our democratic process, I am overcome by the dislike of the constant drum of negative advertising that will begin to beat in early summer. That drum beat will gain volume right on through November before it finally starts to subside. It has risen to the level for me that it starts to overshadow much of what I used to feel good about with our democratic process.

Having spent my career in the communication industry, I am an avid proponent of free speech and the First Amendment. I also have been a strong believer in the Federal Trade Commission's need to enforce Truth in Advertising and the protection of consumers from fraudulent advertising claims. I do not see these two issues in conflict with each other. Then along comes political ads and it seems like all the rules go out the window.



PROTECTED SPEECH!

The fine line between making a false statement about a political opponent and taking a tiny fact and developing some far-fetched conclusion from it seems to get blurrier every election cycle. Outside of the political arena, many of the claims made would be considered a fraudulent advertising claim. Inside the political arena, they are considered an opinion and protected speech under the First Amendment.

I believe our founding fathers intended the First Amendment to protect our ability to speak openly and *honestly*, without government restriction. I can't believe they would say it was intended to protect the right to say false or misleading statements about other people in an effort to gain favor over them in the minds of the public. It was about the freedom to express your opinion, regardless of if whether it was popular or not.

In addition to the negativity, the amount of money spent to influence our opinions is mind boggling. Politicians, political parties and P.A.C.s will spend over \$10 billion dollars on the 2024 elections – a 13% increase from the \$9 billion spent in 2020. To give this some perspective – that will be roughly **3 times** what we spend on Alzheimer's research in 2024, a disease an estimated 6.7 million Americans age 65 and older are living with. Somehow, this just does not seem to add up for me. The average campaign spending

to win a Senate seat in 2018 was \$15.7 million – this investment to get a job that will return \$1.0 million total over the next 6 years! Then we wonder why these same people continually struggle to balance the federal budget!

Don't misunderstand my concerns, I still believe we live in a great country that affords us all with amazing opportunities. I truly believe our system is one of the best, if not the best in the world. It is up to us to sort through all the rhetoric and noise to find the answer we believe is the best option for supporting those personal beliefs. Keeping in mind that there is enough at stake here to attract billions of dollars to drive a specific outcome, that means there will be plenty of misinformation being thrown at us. It becomes critical each of us to do our own fact checking and to focus on what candidates are capable of doing when they take office. Constantly attacking their opponent and making campaign promises of unrealistic accomplishments can't be allowed to drive the outcome.

One thing for sure, 2024 will be an interesting year and the rate of change we see in our world will continue to accelerate. With that understanding, I'm asking for noise canceling headphones for Christmas and preparing myself for all that 2024 has to bring. Who knows, this may just be the year when we all get to exclaim, "If it's free, buy it!" ■

7 MARKETING AND ADVERTISING PREDICTIONS FOR 2024

BY LARISA BEDGOOD

The marketing and advertising landscape is constantly evolving. Digital, AI, big data, fast data – more advancements and new technologies are constantly being introduced. Before we delve into the marketing of the now and near future, let's take a quick trip down memory lane over the past 50 years.

MARKETING AND ADVERTISING – A LOOK BACK OVER THE LAST 50 YEARS

• 1970s: The Rise of Television Advertising

Television became a dominant medium for marketing during the 1970s. Advertisers started creating catchy jingles, memorable slogans, and engaging commercials to capture audience attention.

• 1980s: Direct Marketing and Database Marketing

The 1980s saw the growth of direct marketing techniques, such as direct mail campaigns and telemarketing. The use of customer databases allowed for targeted and personalized marketing messages.

• 1990s: Emergence of Digital Marketing

With the advent of the internet, the 1990s marked the beginning of digital marketing. Websites, email marketing, and banner ads provided new avenues for reaching audiences and targeting specific demographics.

• 2000s: Rise of Social Media and Mobile Marketing

Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube gained popularity in the 2000s. Marketers

started leveraging these platforms to engage with consumers, create viral campaigns, and generate brand awareness. Mobile marketing also became significant with the increasing adoption of smartphones.

• 2010s: Data-Driven Marketing and Personalization

The 2010s witnessed a shift towards data-driven marketing. Marketers began leveraging big data analytics, machine learning, and AI to gain insights into consumer behavior and preferences. Personalized marketing experiences and targeted advertising campaigns became more prevalent.

• 2020s: Omnichannel Marketing and Customer Experience

In the current decade, marketers are focused on delivering consistent and seamless experiences across multiple channels, including digital, social media, mobile, and offline. Customer experience and engagement have become key priorities, with brands emphasizing personalized interactions and building long-term relationships.

Throughout the years, marketing has clearly evolved from traditional mass advertising to a more targeted and personalized approach driven by technology, data, and consumer preferences. The landscape continues to evolve rapidly as new technologies and platforms emerge, allowing marketers to innovate and adapt their strategies to meet the changing demands of consumers.

So, what is 2024 shaping up to be and what are some top trends that are expected to gain traction?

MARKETING TRENDS AND PREDICTIONS FOR 2024

• Rise of AI-Powered Marketing

The rise of AI in marketing is set to continue its upward trajectory in 2024, transforming the industry in profound ways.

Marketers will increasingly rely on AI-powered technologies to analyze vast amounts of data, uncover actionable insights, and automate repetitive tasks, enabling more efficient and effective campaign management.

AI will also play a pivotal role in delivering personalized customer experiences, driving targeted advertising, and optimizing marketing strategies to achieve higher levels of engagement and conversion.

• First Party Data Is the New Standard

Marketers are prioritizing first-party data in their strategies due to stricter privacy regulations, the decline of third-party cookies, and increased customer trust and privacy concerns.

First-party data offers greater accuracy, reliability, and compliance, allowing marketers to personalize campaigns, improve customer experiences, and build long-term relationships directly with their audience.

This shift helps navigate the evolving privacy landscape while delivering more effective and targeted marketing efforts.

• Video Marketing Dominance

Video marketing has solidified its position as a powerful channel for audience engagement, and this trend is expected to flourish in 2024.

Marketers will increasingly utilize video to narrate captivating brand stories, showcase products, and forge deeper connections with their target audience.

2024 TRENDS



Photo credit: Dilok Klaisataporn/shutterstock.com

Live streaming will experience heightened prominence, enabling real-time interaction and authenticity, as brands host live events, product launches, and behind-the-scenes experiences to deliver immersive and compelling content.

• Social Commerce Boom

Social commerce will become even more integrated with features like in-app purchases and shoppable posts, making it easier for consumers to purchase products directly from their social media feeds.

Brands will need to focus on creating a seamless social commerce experience for their customers by optimizing their social media profiles for sales, creating compelling content that encourages purchases, and leveraging the latest social commerce features to make the buying process as easy as possible.

• Increased Focus on Brand Purpose and Social Responsibility

Consumers are placing greater importance on brands' values, social responsibility, and purpose.

Advertisers will emphasize authentic storytelling, highlighting their commitment to social causes and sustainability, as consumers seek out brands that align with their values.

• Privacy-Centric Marketing

With privacy concerns on the rise, 83 percent of consumers want more control over their personal information, according to PwC¹.

Marketers will prioritize privacy-centric practices, including transparent data collection, explicit consent, and secure data handling to build trust and ensure compliance with privacy regulations.

• Continued Shift Toward Streaming and CTV

The shift towards streaming and CTV marketing is expected to continue gaining momentum in 2024.

As consumers increasingly embrace streaming platforms and CTV devices, advertisers will allocate more resources to reach audiences in these digital environments. This will result in increased investments in CTV advertising, with brands leveraging programmatic targeting, data-driven insights, and dynamic ad insertion to deliver personalized and impactful ads to viewers.

Additionally, the convergence of streaming and traditional TV networks may lead to new advertising opportunities and cross-platform campaigns that cater to the

evolving media consumption habits of audiences.

As technology evolves, marketing and advertising strategies are keeping up. Now is the time to spruce up your strategies and get prepared for the year to come. Remember, the key to success lies in continuously monitoring and adapting to the ever-changing marketing landscape, while keeping the customer at the forefront of all strategies and initiatives. Embrace these trends and seize the opportunities they present to build stronger brand connections, drive growth, and stay ahead of the competition in 2024 and beyond. ■

Larisa Bedgood is VP of marketing from Porch Group Media (<https://porchgroupmedia.com>)

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Original Article: <https://www.ana.net/miccontent/show/id/ii-2023-07-marketing-predictions-2024>

¹ <https://www.techrepublic.com/article/data-privacy-what-consumers-want-businesses-to-know/>

PROMISING OUTLOOK FOR THE NORTH AMERICAN PAPER MARKET IN 2024

BY PUBLICATION PRINTERS

2023 provided a welcome respite from the volatility experienced by the North American paper market in recent years as the market stabilized, a trend that is predicted to continue in 2024.

In 2019, North American paper mills generally had warehouses full of excess paper inventory. Printers could call mills, inquiring about specific paper types, and place orders that would be on their loading docks within days. The pandemic has altered the business model of paper mills, and it doesn't look like there will be a return to pre-pandemic levels of paper mill inventory any time soon. However, there is every reason to expect that prices and paper availability will remain fairly consistent over the next year.

During 2021 and 2022, the myriad of challenges faced by paper mills led to extended wait times, strict ordering schedules and a barrage of price increases. At one point, Publication Printers paper experts explain, paper purchasers were dealt 6 price increases within the span of a year and half. Two price increases were even issued within the same quarter, something generally unheard of. Now, those increases have slowed down dramatically. Publication Printers has not seen a pricing increase from any of our mill partners since October of 2022. In fact, there were some slight decreases in freight charges during the past year.

Resource Information Systems Inc., or RISI, is an organization that tracks paper market trends and predicts their probable movement. RISI indicators are a reliable measure of the health and conditions of the paper market. One thing the RISI indicators track is operating rates and capacity. In 2022, RISI reports that North American paper mills were running at an average of 92-96% of



their maximum capacity. This resulted in printers and publishers across the nation experiencing tightly controlled purchasing allocations. As a result, paper purchasers often bought as much paper as they were able, further exacerbating the tight inventories. In 2023, as the market stabilized and printers often strove to right-size their paper purchasing and inventory, rates of production saw a significant drop to around 72%. With the slowing of production, mills often chose to shut down production or close plants as opposed to creating a surplus and building up excess inventory as they had done in the past. Often, a brief shutdown was a welcome chance to perform needed maintenance mills had been unable to accomplish during the busier times. Based on predicted demand, RISI reports that North American paper mills should be running at around 86-89% of capacity in 2024, allowing comfortable room for routine maintenance and preventing the need for strict allocation of

paper stock by the mills. Publishers and printers should continue to err on the side of caution and plan for their paper needs in advance. However, paper is predicted to be more readily available in 2024 than during the pandemic recovery period, allowing for more flexibility and less rigid ordering schedules for printers and publishers.

By all available indicators, the future of paper in 2024 is predicted to be one of increased flexibility and availability compared to the last two years, with relative price stability and limited price increases, as well as increased production of graphics paper in North American mills. ■

Publication Printers Corporation is an Associate Member of ACP located in Denver, Colorado. Publication Printers is a trusted print partner for their 1,500 clients and serves clients all over the country from their one central location. For more information, go to <https://www.publicationprinters.com>

GOAL SETTING IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

BY MIKE CARDUS

Goal Setting and achieving goals is impossible in an environment where

- the goal changes,
- moves as you make progress,
- you have little to no control over other people, who are required, to achieve the goal
- external forces (government regulations, laws) that change their focus are an intricate partner in controlling the goals or in completing the goal

While coaching two managers this week, this same discussion happened.

How can we keep people motivated with goal setting when we do not know what is happening next month?

You try to reframe. Reframing the idea of goal setting as the achievement of a desirable result, to goal setting is a process of developing knowledge and self-efficacy through movement.

The worst thing you can do when the conditions for achievement are impossible is set more goals. I recall in a workshop someone brought up Covey's habit #2 'Begin with the end in mind,' my response;

You can begin with the end in mind only when you know what the end will look like. You cannot see the end in innovative and complex (VUCA)¹ work.

Through a team building activity², I was able to illustrate the challenge and frustration felt when you cannot know what it will look like in the end. It is frustrating when someone wants to treat the challenge as if it is a problem they have solved before and then explain it in a way that others will understand. In the kind of work where goals are liquid, even the expert will not know or be able to explain what will happen as variables change.



Developing goals in a changing environment

Not sure there is a step-by-step recipe, below is what I have found helps to make progress, support people in learning and experimentation, create opportunities to understand as we gain knowledge through progress/ regress.

1. Frame the boundaries of the work. Where are the far edges that cannot be crossed?
2. Identify who or what will be affected by progress. How to best navigate these volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous (VUCA) changes.
3. Share all the factual data you can. Share all the good and bad, not just the good.
4. **Do not** attempt to interpret or serve as a subject-matter-expert who has to translate the data for people. Share the data in a format that others can understand and needs little to no expert opinion. *Abstain from giving your expert advice.*
5. Openly tell people that you do not know what to do, and we are here today to determine what we might do. Doing nothing is an option.
6. Identify things that are working well enough to make progress
7. Identify things that are not working well enough and are causing regress

8. Ask, from the things that are working what we can do more of? How? When? What will be measured?

9. Ask, from the things that are not working what we can do less of? How? When? What will be measured?

10. Commit to 1 area from what working to increase, and what is not working to decrease

11. Determine what you expect to learn from the commitment in #10. Write it down

12. Choose a date to meet and share what happened and what was learned

13. From what changed that works and does not work, determine how you did that. Assign one person to be responsible for understanding, learning and sharing what now works and does not work. *Know you have some knowledge of a goal to be achieved. Determining goals that can be achieved only works when the goal has been achieved before, and we can diagram or understand how it happened the last time.*

14. Do we know enough to make this a standard goal/ project plan? If yes, develop a project plan; if no, repeat step #1

My hope is that we can remove the achievement of goals as organizational plus personal efficacy. Replacing achievement with learning and adaptability as the area of self-efficacy that keeps people feeling good about their work and making progress on things that matter to them. ■

Original Article: <https://mikecardus.com/goal-setting-in-a-changing-environment/>

¹ <https://mikecardus.com/organization-development/understanding-organizational-complexity-and-change/>

² <https://mikecardus.com/how-is-connecting-pvc-pipe-into-a-closed-structure-corporate-development-and-learning/>

2024 ACP MEMBER – TO-DO LIST

JANUARY

- Start selecting *Best of the Best Awards* entries
- Research 2024 ACP Conference and Trade Show in Norfolk, VA
- Pay your 2024 ACP Membership Dues
- Review your 2024 Goals and outline a plan to make sure each gets on track

FEBRUARY

- Finalize selections and submit your *Best of the Best Awards* entries
- Register for the 2024 ACP Conference and Trade Show in Norfolk, VA
- Post information to your employees on the Bob Wright Memorial Scholarships
- Figure out what idea to present at the idea exchange being held at the upcoming conference

MARCH

- Make sure your employees submit application for the Bob Wright Memorial Scholarships
- Nominate a Publisher for 2024 Publisher of the Year
- Nominate an individual for the ACP Distinguished Service Award
- Get materials from ACP related to the 3% USPS discount for Advanced and Emerging Technologies

APRIL

- Apply with USPS for approval on 3% postage discount for Advanced and Emerging Technologies
- Finalize travel plans and activity outline for the 2024 ACP Conference and Trade Show in Norfolk
- Identify item to donate to the Bill Welsh Foundation Silent Auction to be conducted at conference
- Plan idea presentation for the idea exchange at the upcoming conference

2024 TO-DO LIST

MAY

- Attend the ACP Conference in Norfolk, VA on May 1-3, 2023
- Complete post conference survey
- Identify 3 things from conference you will implement over the next 7 months (write them down)
- Start earning the 3% USPS discount on your postage for publication distribution

JUNE

- Pick 3 classes to complete this month in the On Demand Training Center
- Make a three sales calls using something you learned from those classes
- Look for details on the ACP Fall Leadership Retreat
- Review progress to your 2024 goals – revisit January outline for any adjustments / corrections

JULY

- Celebrate Free Paper Month
- Start planning a new fall promotion – look for ideas in the July Publish magazine
- Build your digital revenue to support your core print offerings with ACP's January Spring partnership
- Take the time to call someone who helped you along the way and thank them for that help!

AUGUST

- Register for the ACP Fall Leadership Summit
- Prepare for Back to School – Pick 3 classes to take this month in the On Demand Training Center
- Finish preparations for that new fall promotion you came up with in July
- Contact local political campaigns in your area with advertising information packages

2024 TO-DO LIST

SEPTEMBER

- Attend the ACP Fall Leadership Retreat
- Plan a “buy local” program/promotion to support advertisers in the coming holiday season
- Review your media kit now for the coming year – include your current CVC statistics
- Attend an ACP Open Discussion call – bring a publication question you need answered

OCTOBER

- Vote for ACP slate of officers for 2025-2026 term
- Kick-off the “Buy Local” program with fill ads in your publication promoting the benefits
- Buy something locally that you probably would have probably bought online
- Discuss with employees how important buying from people who do business with your company is

NOVEMBER

- Nominate your under 36 year old professional for the 2025 Rising Stars
- Register for the 2025 Leadership Retreat
- Attend an ACP Open Discussion call – bring a publication question you need answered
- Complete your ADS Network verification form and return it to the ACP Office

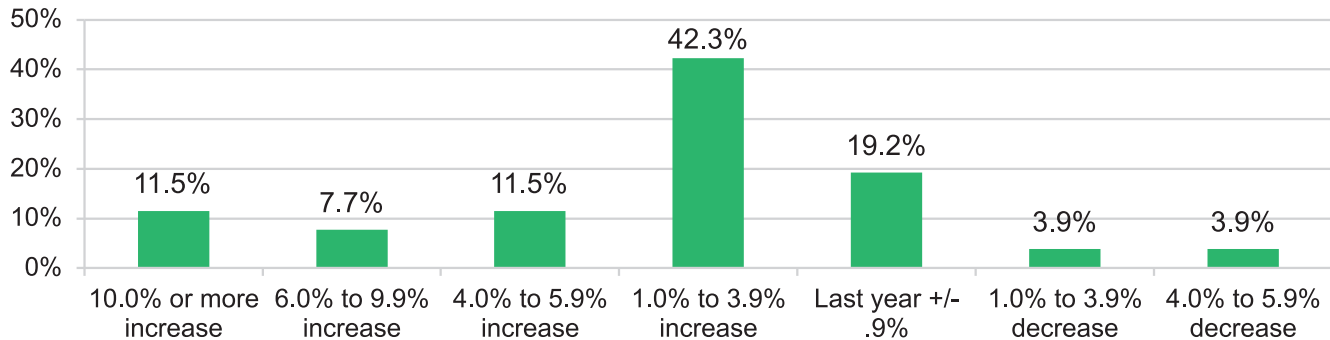
DECEMBER

- Pick 3 more classes to complete this month in the On Demand Training Center
- Finalize travel plans and personal activity outline for the 2025 ACP Leadership Retreat
- Increase your digital revenue projections for 2025 with ACP's January Spring Program
- Determine your biggest business weakness – outline plan to improve it in 2026

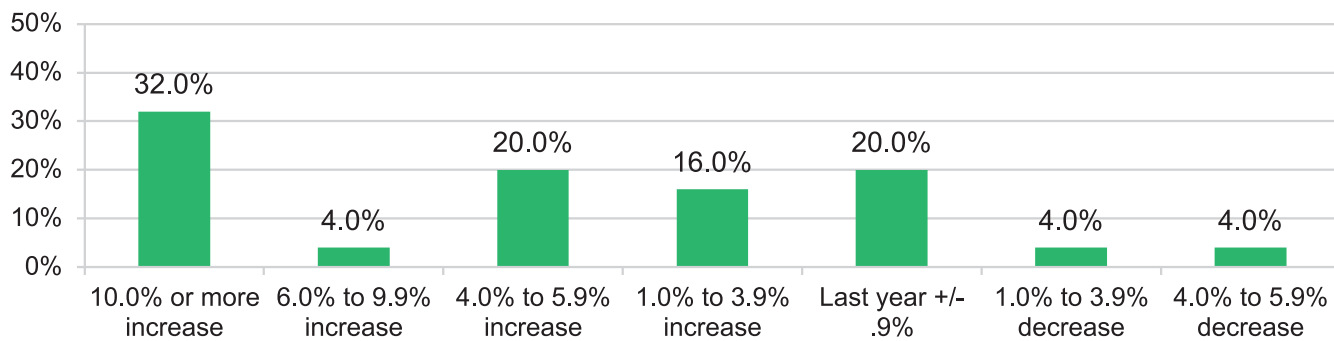
THE SURVEY SAYS...



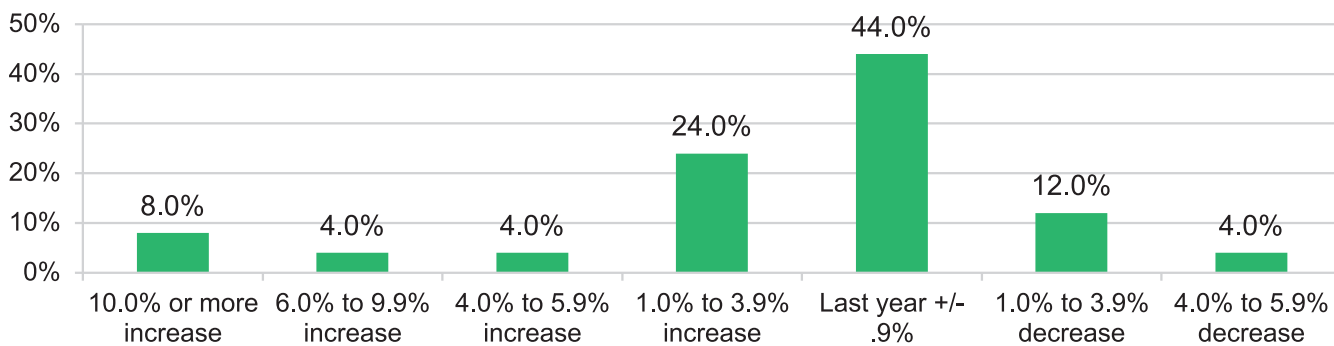
What is your forecast for display sales growth in 2024?



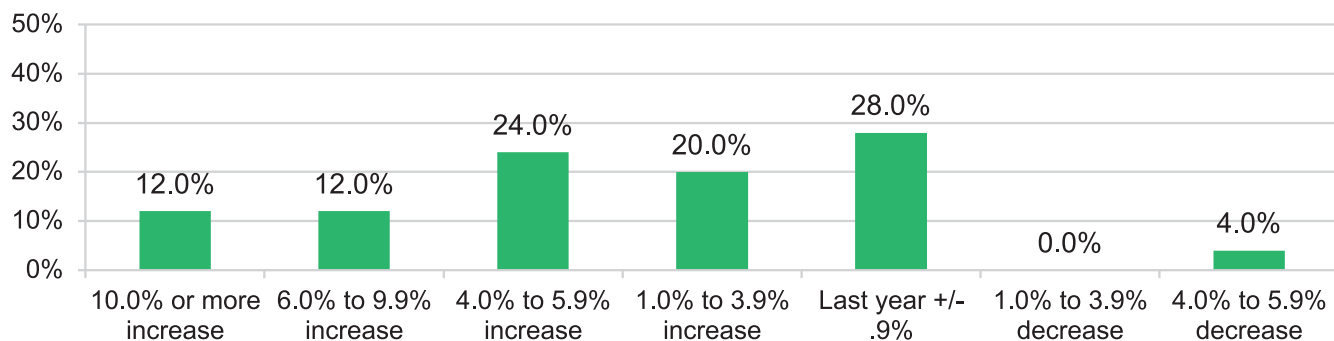
What is your forecast for digital products sales growth in 2024?



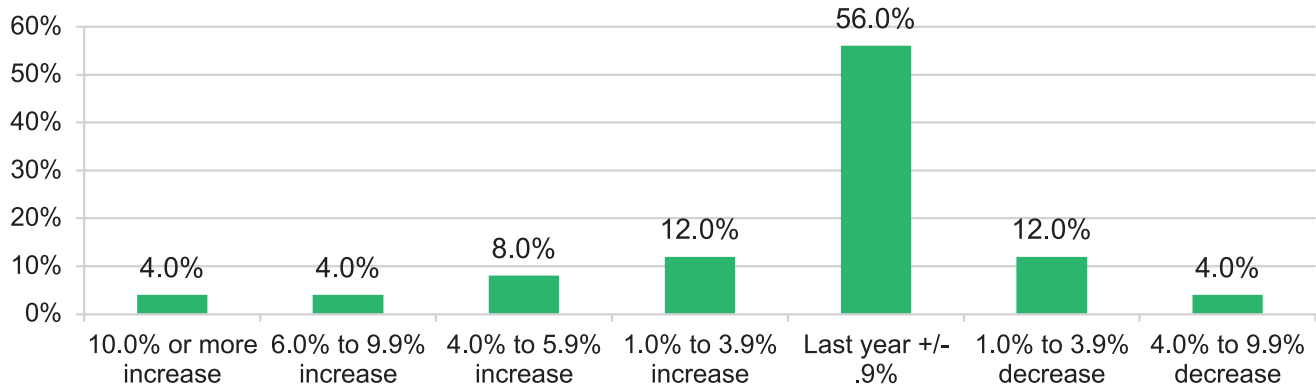
What is your forecast for insert sales growth in 2024?



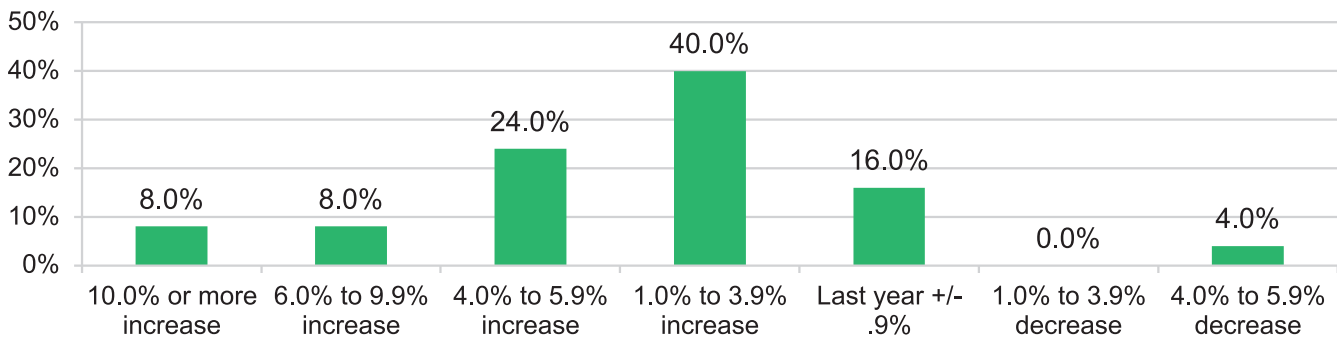
What is your forecast for special promotions sales growth in 2024?



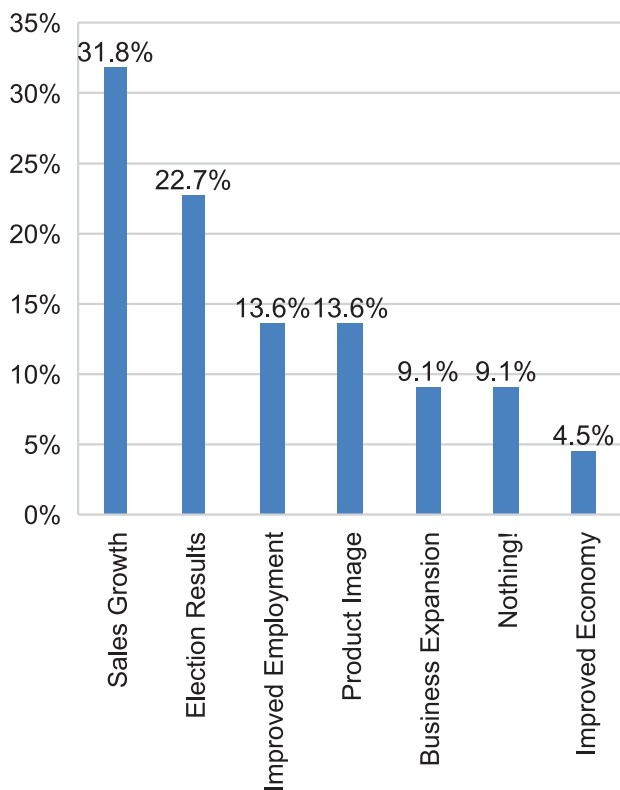
What is your forecast for classified sales growth in 2024?



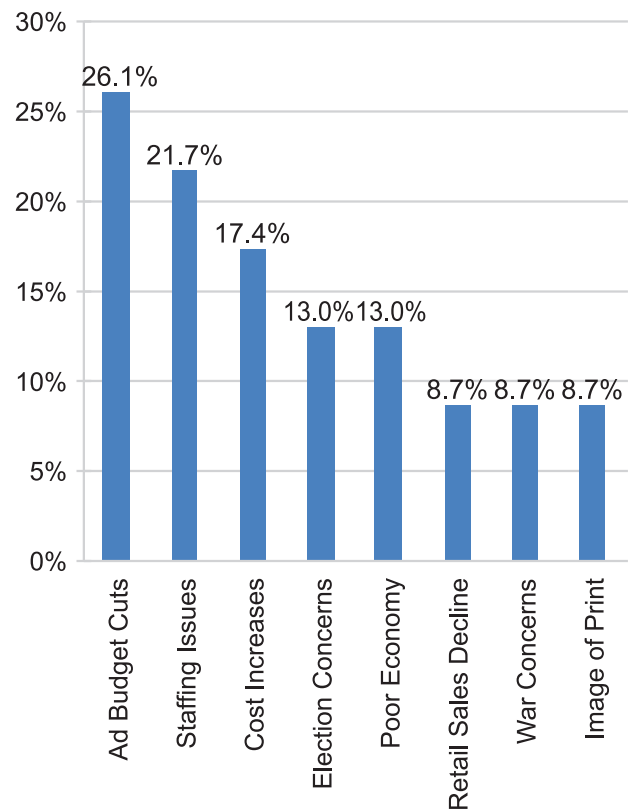
What is your forecast for 2024 combined publications sales growth?



When asked what the most important positive thing you see coming in 2024, respondents mentioned the following...



When asked what the most impactful negative thing you see coming for 2024, respondents mentioned the following...



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

bestpractice.biz – Article

Best Business Resolutions To Help Your Company Grow

Although written last April, this information is all still relevant and worth looking over before you dive into the new year. You may not keep your personal resolutions, but business resolutions may be just your thing.



Better Business Bureau – Article

10 New Year's resolutions for your small business

By Better Business Bureau

This is a solid list of things needing your focus to build a stronger company for 2024. There is no rocket science here, just good resolutions to follow and a ton of additional links for support materials.



HustleandGroove.com – Article

How to Use a 90-Day Plan to Explode Your Productivity

By Lise Cartwright

Instead of looking a whole year out and losing track of the goal, this article addresses how to break down short term goals into manageable and obtainable segments. Not a new concept but effective for those of us that can get overwhelmed with the day to day.



allbusiness.com – Article

For Small Business, the Outlook for 2024 Is Actually Bright—Here's Why

By Rieva Lesonsky

This article offers an optimistic view of consumer confidence and consumer spending outlooks for 2024. Based on what they are hearing from clients, even workforce issues are beginning to look better.



Quantumrun.com – Article

Predictions for 2024

An interesting and thought-provoking list of real world transformational events that should take place in 2024. Each prediction includes a link to supporting materials that back up the claim. It is global in subject matter, but quite interesting.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Linkedin - Article

What outlook can small business owners expect for 2024?

By Raphael Koehle

A quick read related to both the obstacles and the opportunities facing small businesses in 2024. It may generate more alarm than optimism, so if you are looking for a feel-good article – move on to the next one!



Allbusiness.com - Article

Best Business Websites: 17 Sites You Should Be Reading Regularly

By Richard Harroch

An interesting list of websites offering information of all types. The list covers everything from news, financial markets, business advice and a whole lot more. Interesting mix of sources to reference.



GWI - Blog Article

The biggest consumer trends for 2024

By Jason Mander

Offering both the long and the short versions, this article looks at consumer trends that will impact all businesses. There is an interesting section in here on media trust (or the lack of it)!



Single Grain - Blog Article

13 Display Advertising Trends You Can't Ignore in 2024

By Stephanie Jensen

This is written from a digital display ad perspective and offers some interesting information. Loaded with statistics to support information and links for additional information, if you are embracing digital you'll want to read this article.



Newest addition for your "Advertiser Help Page" Listings

The Empire Group - Article

70 Best Print Adverts Of All Time

If you are looking for creative inspiration, this is a fantastic resource. It provides some amazingly creative examples of print ads from all over the world and in a variety of industries. Really an enjoyable review of what creative minds can do!



RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME

BY JANE QUAIROLI

Sometimes you just happen to be in the right place at the right time. For me that right time was a day in 1984.

I was working at our local Sears store selling major appliances when a gentleman who also worked at the store handed me a business card and said "you need to go see my wife". His wife just happened to be the District Sales Manager for Kapp Advertising Service in the Lebanon office.

THAT is how I got started in this incredible industry. And the rest is history.

I started my career at Kapp Advertising as a sales representative, covering 4 towns. I loved meeting business owners and their employees, finding out their needs, and helping develop an advertising plan. I am proud that many of those businesses are still around and have grown into dominant forces in their industries. I know that Kapp Advertising had a hand in their success.

One such business, Weaver Building Systems, started as a mom-and-pop business installing pole barns and has flourished into a major building contractor in our area. In fact, they built the townhouse community I live in. And though "mom and pop" have retired the business remains in the family with their son in charge.

Weaver Building Systems had a hand in constructing the building of another success story. County Lane Furniture started in a location so small that the furniture was stacked. I used to weave my way around the store to the office of the owner. Weekly advertising helped them grow into a larger location and eventually into a 61,000 sq ft store.

My career path changed in 2000 when I became the Assistant District Sales Manager for the Lebanon office. In 2012 I moved into the District Sales Manager role, replacing Randy Miller who became our General Sales Manager. 2017 found me as Specialty

Merchandiser magazine cover featuring 'Essay contest focuses on history and creative writing' and 'Diabetes Awareness Walk a success'.

Advertisement for 'MARKETS AT SHREWSBURY' with a 'THANKSGIVING DINNER MADE SIMPLE' headline and an image of a turkey dinner.

Publications Manager. I managed our About Families and GoLocal publication and website and specialty product sales. And in March 2020, I became Administrative Coordinator overseeing promotions for both our Lebanon and Hanover offices while continuing to manage website, specialty products, and, most recently, digital advertising sales.

Our founder, Robert Kapp, was instrumental in the creation of both regional and national associations for our industry and numerous Kapp team members have served on the boards of these organizations. In September of 2018, I had the honor of joining that list by becoming an IFPA board member and transitioning into an At-Large board member of the newly merged ACP.

Rob Kapp always saw involvement in these organizations as an investment and I couldn't agree more! Over the past 73 years, we have had the privilege of contributing to AND learning from the members of these organizations.

Being involved with the merging of IFPA and AFCP into ACP showed me, once again, the power of thinking

about our industry not just our individual companies. The care and concern for our industry, our members, and staff was top of mind during the entire procedure. It was quite impressive to behold!

I have the privilege of attending both MACPA, our regional association, and ACP events. This has allowed me to take advantage of the TLI courses offered. Receiving my AAE graduation certificate in 2018 was a very proud moment for me.

At Kapp Advertising we believe that ongoing training is essential for all departments within the company and continuing the TLI curriculum and ACP's newest offering, Power Sales University, are extremely important to me. As the current chair of ACP's Education and Training committee, I am honored to help facilitate training opportunities that offer our members help in this area. The training and networking that takes place at these conferences has been invaluable not only to Kapp Advertising, but also to me as an individual in this industry.

Looking back on my years at Kapp, I remember getting our first fax machine (which now rarely gets used) and cell phone. When email came along, I thought, WOW, this will make things easier. It has, but it will never take the place of being face to face with an advertiser.

Seeing how our graphics department has advanced is also fascinating...no more cutting, waxing, or veloxes. Now everything is digital.

Advancements in technology have made our processes easier, but I know one thing that never changes... service to both our customers and our community.

Who knew that when I started at Kapp Advertising in 1984 that I would still be here (at 23 years of age, you don't think about that far in the future)! But I am so happy I am. My advice to anyone just starting out is "stay with it". It's been a wonderful ride! ■

RISING STAR



GET YOUNG PROFESSIONALS EXCITED ABOUT THIS INDUSTRY!

The ACP Rising Stars program is designed to honor individuals under the age of 36 who are emerging leaders in the community publication industry. This annual program will recognize up to 7 individuals who represent the best of our up-and-coming industry professionals. These individuals exemplify good character, leadership, and professionalism not only at work, but in the communities they serve.

NOMINEE QUALIFICATIONS

These individuals should show the promise of and a commitment to impacting their publication and the industry in a positive manner through professional achievement. Nominees must also show they not only perform their jobs to a high standard, but they also have a commitment to furthering their knowledge and abilities. Nominees must actively work in the free paper industry for a member or associate member of ACP and are required to have been employed for more than a year. Nominees must not be 36 prior to December 31, 2023.



RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Award recipients will be recognized in Publish Magazine, the official publication of ACP.

An awards presentation program will be conducted during the next national in-person conference celebrating the participants and their contributions to the program. All of the individuals participating are awarded free room, registration, meal plan, specialized training

sessions and up to \$500 in travel reimbursements to the next in-person conference.

ONGOING OPPORTUNITY

The ACP Rising Stars program does not end with the recognition program. Rising Stars will be asked to assist the various initiatives of the association on an ongoing basis for up to three years. ACP recognizes that we have much to learn from these talented young people and desires to use their skills to help us lead the free paper industry. In return for participation in regularly scheduled conference calls and for volunteering some time to assist with ACP initiatives, ACP will provide additional leadership development opportunities and the opportunity to attend future conferences for even more training. ■

The nomination deadline is December 15, 2023 and the nomination form is available at: <https://www.communitypublishers.com/rising-stars>

WHAT WE SEE IN THE STARS FOR 2025!

Here are the responses from our ACP Rising Stars when asked the following question:
What do you think will be the most impactful change, insight, event or aspect of 2024 to impact our industry?

I think in 2024 businesses are going to need to find a way to reach more customers. Most of my market is trying Facebook as they want to try something different, and business is significantly down. They are now reaching out to us on what we can do to help them. We are trying new ways to showcase their business and keep it local as the online market continues to rise daily and businesses are having to lower their profits when pages like TEMU and SHEIN offer items for cheap.

KARI JURRENS
 New Century Press

I think (and hope) that print publications are going to grow in 2024. Even though digital and AI have all the bells and whistles, digital can deter user engagement due to tracking and not being to interact with the ad itself. People are still looking forward to their publication and trusting it more than some aspects of digital media.

CHRISTINE WHITE
 Featured Media

I believe 2024 will be a fast paced, growing year for our industry. With the digital world rapidly progressing, I'm hoping to incorporate several digital solutions paired with print advertising to help our client's business' grow to their max potential. Personally, towards the end of this year I have been seeing a lot of programmatic display campaigns as well as social media campaigns. But still, we would be missing a whole demographic without print. If we can maintain an efficient balance between the digital world and the print world, I believe 2024 could be the best marketing year yet for our customers!

MACKENZIE MCGRAIN
 Featured Media

I think a lot of people are going to say AI or automation, and I don't disagree, it'll become a part of everything we do moving forward, on another hand, my prediction for what will be significant for our industry in 2024 is finding new and unique ways to create interactivity to readers. Things like digital opportunities, personalization, augmented reality, and cross media integration will push forward for 2024.

KARA IVISON
 Featured Media

The A.I. boom will continue to be the hot topic. However, with the rise and ever-growing adoption of digital products, I believe the biggest change in the publishing industry will come in the form of companies re-branding their focus as merely publishing companies to full-blown marketing agencies.

CORY REGNIER
 Citizen Publishing

I believe with the increase of polarizing unprecedented historical events taking place worldwide, news media outlets universally will be valued more than ever before. Accurate and responsible coverage on upcoming global events like elections, global conflict, emerging technologies, and how these events effect the populace will be crucial in the upcoming year. These events will have cascading effects on all of us, on both a national and individual level and many levels in-between. Most major news stories originate from local publications and have the potential to spread globally and these stories are key for how audiences decide to navigate in an ever-changing world. I believe service of spreading information that we in this industry provide to the world will prove to be invaluable.

NATHANIEL ABRAHAM III
 Carolina Panorama

I foresee the publishing industry turning to more visual content and storytelling - not replacing the written word, but the two intersecting more and more. Whether it's for readers or advertisers, I think visuals have a certain appeal to not only be eye-catching, but to also help tell the story and give the reader insight into just who an advertiser is as a business, and who they are as a person well.

KAITLIN DONNAN
 Featured Media

I think the most important thing we must do is be open to change in general. Every year technology changes, the economy, people's habits, and mindsets. One thing we can count on is change and how we react to it and embrace it is how we can keep succeeding.

The use of AI will continue to evolve, and we should continue to educate ourselves. Keeping up with new equipment is always a good way to keep products running in a timely fashion. 2024 is an election year so we must keep that in mind with the economy, and no one can predict that outcome.

People's habits and mindsets can be an outlier. We can try to adjust as to what is more appealing such as social media presence. But I do always feel that some might also like to keep it simple and still enjoy flipping and feeling an actual printed piece, so it's nice to have both options.

CARMEN CAMPBELL
 Featured Media

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



**OVER THE LAST
16 YEARS**

Over 2,500

INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS
HAVE PARTICIPATED

140

CERTIFIED ADVERTISING
EXECUTIVE CERTIFICATIONS
AWARDED BY ACP

To learn more about taking advantage of TLI classes, the new-hire training sequence or Power Sales University through ACP, contact the ACP office at 877-203-2327.

“Life is divided into three terms – that which was, which is, and which will be. Let us learn from the past to profit by the present, and from the present, to live better in the future.

— William Wordsworth

BY JIM BUSCH

I've always liked Mondays, new months, and New Year's Days. They are all wrapped in possibilities. The possibility to correct our past mistakes. The possibility of doing better in the "next round." First and foremost, these new beginnings contain the possibility of becoming a better person. These "open door" moments are far too valuable to leave to chance. Before we cross the threshold to the future, we should stop to review our past; where we stand in the present and then decide where we want to be in the future. To do this effectively, we need to set emotions aside and focus on the facts at hand. Beating ourselves up with regrets and "should've and could've" only blurs our vision. While the past may be dead, there is much to be learned from a thorough clinical autopsy of our actions. In this process, it is particularly important to examine our decision-making processes. "Where were we wrong, and where were we right in our assumptions?" This information is invaluable in improving our future planning processes. We need to take the same analytical approach to where we stand in the present. To chart a course to the future, we need to have an accurate understanding of our current position. We need to look at our products and our activities to see which are producing results and which are not producing a reasonable return on our investment of time and other resources. "We've always done it that way" is no reason to continue doing something that is no longer profitable. When we look at the future, we need to focus on the things that are within our control. We cannot build our plans on hopes that the economy will improve, or that our competitors will cut back. We need to focus on the new products we will launch, the new techniques we will adopt, and the training we will engage in. We need to set goals for every aspect of our business and be prepared to make course corrections as the future unfolds. As we approach the New Year, the time of possibility, it is time to use the past and present to profit by building a better future. ■

FULL LOAD OR HALF-LOAD



BY JOHN FOUST
RALEIGH, NC

Greg used to help his uncle sell and deliver firewood on weekends. No doubt, that influenced one of his first phone calls when he started selling advertising for his local newspaper. His prospect asked, “Why are you asking so many questions?” and he said, “I’m just trying to figure out if you need a full load or a half-load.”

Greg’s sales manager told me it was one of the most honest things she had ever heard a salesperson say. “He was doing the right thing by asking questions to discover needs,” She explained. “When the prospect wondered what was going on, Greg admitted that, yes, he was calling to talk about a possible ad campaign, but he couldn’t recommend anything until he learned about the prospect’s business.

“Although he no longer talks about full loads and half-loads, he still does a great job of learning about his prospects and how they need to market their products,” she said.

When you think about it, it’s easy to see that firewood and advertising have a lot in common. Both serve specific purposes and both occupy measurable space. A full load of advertising is a big campaign splash with a sizable budget, while a half-load is something less than that.

Let’s see where this firewood comparison leads:

1. What’s in the truck? In other words, know your product. In order to help your advertisers decide between full loads, half-loads, or other options, it’s important to know as much as possible about what you’re selling. If your prospects know more about your newspaper’s advertising products than you, you won’t have much credibility.

2. What do they want? It’s a waste of time to try to sell firewood to someone who doesn’t have a fireplace or a woodstove. And it’s just as wasteful to try to sell advertising to someone who doesn’t need it.

Know your prospect. Not everyone needs everything that is being sold. That is one of the biggest lessons of selling.

3. Deliver to the right place.

At one time or another, everyone in the selling profession has made the mistake of talking to the wrong contact. While that person may be perfectly willing to spend time on the phone or in an appointment, he or she may not be in a position to make – or influence – buying decisions.

In order to find the right contact, consider saying something like, “In order to save time for you, I wonder if you can tell me who makes decisions about your company’s advertising?” Then... “What is the best way to get in touch with that person?”

4. Tell the truth. Don’t try to sell a full load to someone who needs a half-load. If they find out later that they bought the wrong thing, they’ll feel burned. Not only will they stop advertising in your paper, they’ll tell all their friends about it.

Like the old saying goes, “Honesty is the best policy.” That goes for selling firewood or advertising or anything else. ■

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John Foust has conducted training programs for thousands of newspaper advertising professionals. Many ad departments are using his training videos to save time and get quick results from in-house training. E-mail for information: john@johnfoust.com

Graphic Hooks

By Ellen Hanrahan

hanrahan.ln@att.net © 12/2023

During the holidays we tend to use more Script Typefaces in our ads. Keep in mind that *John McWade*, (*Before and After*), defined type as “the visible voice,” so it stands to reason that script faces seem to evoke more meaning and heartfelt emotion into our word. Perhaps these typefaces remind us of the time when correspondence was handwritten.

Typefaces: Italic or Script

An italic typeface refers to the slant of the character and varies with the typeface and is usually part of a larger family of typefaces.

A script typeface is specifically designed to look like handwriting. Although with all the technology we have, we may have eliminated that genre.

Script typefaces can and do stand out from the rest of the text, but they are harder to read so you must exercise the same amount of care that you do when you use italic typefaces.

With the advent of the Open Type format, many of these script typefaces offer a variety of glyphs to further, customize the “look” of the typeface. With all these choices remember to use restraint, so I offer a few gentle reminders...

Use as display type

Script typefaces do not lend themselves as a text type. The x-heights of the letters are usually smaller than regular text type and because of the free-form letters, we do not always recognize them as readily as we do standard text typefaces. I'd say that 18 point should be the minimum size used—but the best use is as large as you can.

My samples are 26 points or more, and size can vary greatly with each typeface! There are a lot more options to choose from now with some of the scripts—more individualized, and less “hand-written,” but still making a personal endeavor.

Be brief

If you have chosen a script typeface, use that as the attention-getter. You don't want to over-use them, because the impact and reason for their use will be diluted.

Headlines, pull-quotes, etc. are also a good way to incorporate scripts into your ad layout. This is the same guideline that should be used in working with italic typefaces, although the readability and legibility of a script typeface is very important.

Use discretion

There are a lot of script faces and I'll show some examples a little later. By and large they fall into four categories: formal, casual, calligraphic and blackletter scripts. Italic typefaces are similar to scripts and generally range from the simple obliques to those that resemble more cursive writing, but the same guidelines apply to italic typefaces as well.

There are probably thousands of script faces, so pick one! Don't mix scripts in an ad because their look is so distinctive, they just won't mix.

As with most typefaces, all caps can also ruin the effect. Lowercase letter forms are meant to flow into each other, which is one of the other reasons to avoid tight letterspacing or kerning—they need to breathe!

So by all means, use scripts to enhance the message—just make sure that there is contrast—in size, in color, and even in the characters themselves, to make their use effective in your advertising.

In the next column I have used some seasonal headings with various script typefaces to show how different they can be—including some of my favorites! I have also included the name of the typeface and the point size I used. You can also see that type size varies considerably in the different script typefaces so don't be afraid to use them as large as you can.

Happy Holidays!
Feel Script Bold (32 point)

Joyeux Noël
Hot Salsa (36 point)
with DF Calligraphic Ornament (26 point)

Feliz Navidad!
Candy Script (33 point)

Season's Greetings!
Samantha Italic PRO
38 point

Cheers!
Scrapbooker Script (28 point)



Readability and Legibility Review

Readability: the “comfort level” that we achieve—the ease in reading text. Readability factors include upper and lower case, letterspace and wordspace, point size, line length and line space, type alignment and of course reverse type.

Legibility: refers to the clarity of the individual characters and relies on the specific and inherent characteristics of a typeface. Legibility factors include type weight, type shape and serif and sans serif faces.

These attributes are a part of any design consideration and very important in having the reader easily understand any message delivered—and are especially critical in a “hand-written” choice; the look could impede readability if not handled appropriately.

Final thoughts...

I was at some ACP virtual sessions in October and have a few ideas for the new year! In the meantime...

A very blessed and joy-filled Holiday to everyone!

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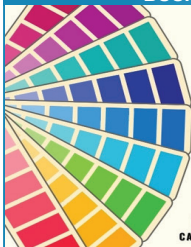


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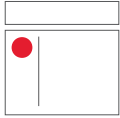
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