

# Publish

FEBRUARY 2024



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## MEMBER BENEFITS GUIDE

THE ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY PUBLISHERS

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# Publish

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## COMING NEXT MONTH

The March *Publish* will take a look into the current events driving the publication business climate. As always, we will also cover the people, information and issues influencing the community publishing industry.

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For more information, call ACP at 877-203-2327 or email [office@communitypublishers.com](mailto:office@communitypublishers.com)



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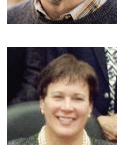
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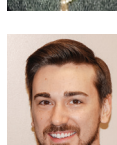


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## Print's not dead, it's

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**72.4% report frequently purchasing products or services from ads seen in their community's ACP Member publication!**



**The Association of Community Publishers**

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# THE ESSENTIAL BUSINESS TRAIT



BY MANUEL KARAM

There's a popular meme that occasionally shows up in my LinkedIn feed. I've seen a few variations of the message, but it typically follows a similar pattern. It features two graphs side by side. One graph suggests something like "what we think success looks like" portraying an arrow shooting straight up in a 45-degree diagonal. The adjacent graph says something like "what success actually looks like" displaying an arrow starting out straight up, but then dropping back down, going back up, going down again, sometimes going backwards, and eventually ending toward the top. Some memes get creative, showing someone falling into an alligator pit or off a cliff instead of an arrow going down. But the message rings loud and clear: professional success (and many other things in life) are not easy. We need unrelenting dedication to our goals, even when things get tough. In essence, resilience is crucial for success.

The conclusion of a recent book covered by CNBC seems to agree<sup>1</sup>. In their book "Smart Startups: What Every Entrepreneur Needs to Know- Advice from 18 Harvard Business School Founders", authors Catalina Daniels and James Sherman interviewed Harvard Business School graduates who went on to found successful companies like Blue Apron, Gilt Group and Rent the Runway, and asked them to explain the biggest key to their success. All agreed it wasn't a great business idea, prior leadership experience or even educational background. You guessed right—it was resilience.

What exactly is resilience? Author Sherman defines it in the article as "a combination of grit and motivation...what you need to keep yourself powering forward, despite all of the obstacles". Oxford Languages online provides it as "the capacity to withstand or to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness." Anna Auerbach, co-founder of an online job marketplace called Werk, likened it to being a parent. Said Auerbach, "You have incredibly hard days as a parent, but you don't stop being a parent.... you don't just give up."

The best part about resilience is that it's not an inherited trait that only some are born with. It's really a choice. It's refusing to stay down if you stumble and fall. And while resilience involves refusing to quit, one thing it is not is blind stubbornness. Stubbornness often means you won't change. Resilience, on the other hand, implies a willingness to adjust the sails when needed. If you hit a wall, it's realizing what you ran into, why it happened and how you can get around or over it—not running right back into it again.

So as we look ahead to the rest of this year, remember, things won't always go the way we'd like. If we're really unlucky we'll even end up in an alligator pit. However, we can always choose to get back on the path and continue forward. ■

<sup>1</sup> Huddleston, Tom Jr. "These authors interviewed 18 Harvard startup founders: Here's the No.1 trait that made them successful." *CNBC.com*, November 10, 2023, <https://www.cnbc.com/2023/11/10/these-authors-interviewed-18-harvard-startup-founders-heres-the-no-1-trait-that-made-them-successful.html>. Accessed January 12, 2024.

## THE ONE THING



BY DOUGLAS FRY

## FIND YOUR MOTIVATION

**F**amily vacations are the stuff of legends. Think of the Griswold family in the “National Lampoon’s Vacation” series or “Thelma and Louise.” When our kids were young we often visited my wife’s parents on the North Carolina coast. We couldn’t afford to fly our family so we chose the automobile route. If we drove that distance by car

it would take either 12 hours of struggling with bored children or driving through the night while they slept. Either way it was a grueling task.

When I got my pilots license we were able to cut that 12 hours down to about 3 1/2. After work on Friday afternoon we would pack a couple of suitcases, make some snacks, get the three kids, and cram everyone into the small Piper Cherokee that was in the hangar near our home. I always checked the weather between home and Wilmington, NC to make sure we could actually get there. As a new pilot I was limited to flying in good weather. I flew VFR (Visual Flight

Rules). I could fly around clouds, fly under clouds, fly over clouds, but never fly through clouds. Lacking the complete training to fly solely by instruments I had to be able to see where I was flying.

One of those trips comes to mind when I consider how to motivate myself. We left Fayetteville, Tennessee with a weather forecast of beautiful skies and smooth air. We climbed up to 11,500 feet for our cruise to Wilmington. After about 30 minutes of smooth air and the constant drone of the small engine the three kids were asleep in the back of the plane. Deb was my spotter and kept her



# THE ONE THING



airport we saw an opening. If I was by myself I would have simply dropped through the hole in the clouds and got ready to land. But with the kids and a nervous wife I had to take my time or the vomit bucket would have been deployed. With the precision of an amateur pilot I made a wide circle around the hole in the clouds and gradually descended. Think of the technique as a very large corkscrew.

We got through the hole, flew on to Wilmington, and landed without incident. End of story right? Not quite.

On Monday morning we began our return flight. The weather forecast called for stronger winds out of the northwest so I made course corrections to keep us on track. However, somewhere around Columbia, South Carolina the kids had to stop for a bathroom break. We were about 30 miles south of where we were supposed to be but we landed at a local airstrip and took care of business. Afterward, we loaded up the plane with everyone and took off, heading toward Fayetteville, Tennessee. This time I made a larger adjustment for the wind which was blowing us toward the south with greater alacrity than was forecast. Still no problem.

The potty break and the course deviation made us later than expected and the sun was going down. Again, this was still not a problem because I truly enjoy flying at night. At night the air is nice and smooth and the earth below looks like someone knew what they were doing when they built cities and roads. This is where the problem occurred. We had about an hour to go when we noticed the horizon to our west looked very dark. About the same time Flight Following from Chattanooga called us on the radio and told us that there was a front of thunderstorms ahead of us that ranged from Ohio to the Gulf of Mexico. In other words, we couldn't get home. I asked the person to give us a heading to land in Chattanooga which we followed and landed there.

We thought we could simply wait out the storm but it was a big one. So, we parked the plane, rented a car, loaded up the luggage and family, and drove the remaining 90 miles home. The storm on the way home was a doozie. With each mile in that storm I lost more and more confidence in my ability to fly the plane. By the time we got home I was in full panic mode. The problem was I still had to return the car and get the plane back home. I decided I would wait until the next morning to make that trip.

I thought about sleep but was too nervous. So around 10:00 pm I got back in the car and headed to Chattanooga one more time. I knew I had to psych myself up to get that plane home. So I did what any normal person would do and started loudly humming the theme song to the Indiana Jones movies over and over again as I drove. If Indiana Jones could face challenges, so could I. That song, sung repeatedly, cleared away my doubts and gave me the confidence I needed.

I arrived at the airport, turned in the rental car, fired up the Cherokee, took off, and headed back home. Whenever doubts arose, like when I was flying over the inky blackness of a national forest, I started playing that song again in my mind. After about 45 minutes I saw the Fayetteville airport lights. I made it! It was a Hollywood ending to a harrowing experience.

What is the One Thing? In your life you will experience events that shake your confidence. Find your inner Indiana Jones and go for your goals no matter what. You got this. No one can stop you but you. Find what motivates you and keep it available whenever you need a boost. It might be a song, a saying or phrase, a medallion or token you carry with you. Whatever it is, keep it handy. Last of all, if you see me in person and hear me humming the theme song to Indiana Jones you'll know that I'm going to take care of business no matter what. ■

eyes open for other aircraft. As we flew along we saw clouds beginning to form below us. Soon we couldn't see anything but clouds: no earth, no airports, no tiny farms, just clouds.

I did what I was trained to do and called ATC (Air Traffic Control) on the radio. I asked them what the weather conditions were in Wilmington. I was told "blue skies, winds light and variable at 3 knots from the East, visibility 20 miles." That was a beautiful forecast. So, we kept flying. As we approached Wilmington I called the Wilmington tower to let them know we were coming in to land. The problem was we were still above the clouds with no opening in sight. The air traffic controller assured me it was good weather but advised us to look for openings in the clouds. About 40 miles from the

*Best of the Best Awards*



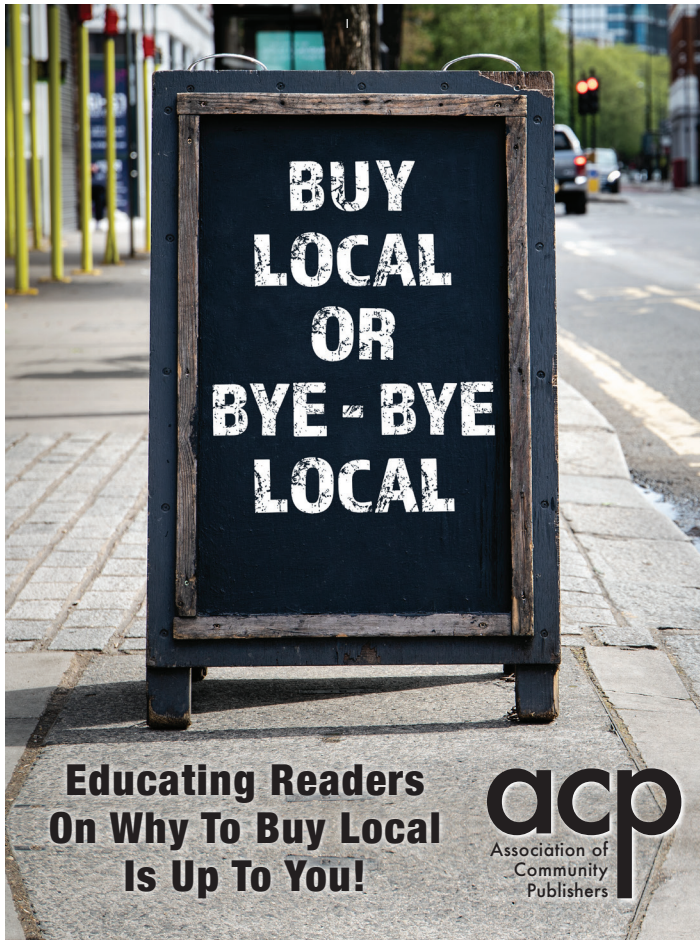

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**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

Entries must be received digitally by February 29, 2024.


Information and entry instructions for this year's new digital submissions process are available at:

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Lynn Telleen, 3/7/23

**KAMEN & CO IS PROUD TO BE THE EXPERT MEDIA FINANCIAL RESOURCE FOR FORBES 400 LIST OF AMERICAS RICHEST PEOPLE. 2015-2024**



BY LOREN COLBURN

Every trade association, in almost every industry, continually evaluates what member benefits they can provide that will deliver the most value to their membership. I personally have been involved in hundreds of these discussions over my 40+ year involvement with AFCP and now ACP. My take-a-way from that exposure is that keeping member benefits in line with the changing needs of members within a rapidly evolving industry can be a daunting task, but one that is critical to both the publication's and association's survival.

This issue of Publish will provide an overview of many of the member benefits available through the Association of Community Publishers. You may think you are totally aware of everything ACP has to offer, but I would challenge you to take the time to review each offering to make sure you clearly understand those programs you may think are "familiar". Almost every benefit has been reviewed and updated where needed for 2024. It is also critical you look at the new programs we have added

that you may not even be aware exist because in your busy day, the notification got lost in the chaos.

Keeping each of you each informed of what has changed and what is new becomes a more complicated task all the time. We obviously utilize Publish to communicate with you as well as emails on a regular basis. The hardest part is getting you to take the time in your busy day to read the Publish articles or email blasts that are trying to explain what the association is doing to improve your business, your people, or your bottom line. With industry averages telling me an open rate of 15 to 28% is good, we average a 44% open rate! Instead of feeling we are doing a good job, we worry about how else to connect with the 56% who were too busy to open the email they received. I will promise you this, we are very committed to making sure every email is relevant and necessary for our members and the industry. With that, I would request that even if the subject line doesn't sound like something you need, invest 5 seconds to open and make sure – we might be just trying to save you money!

I'll use the USPS postage discount program as a great example. We develop an ad that will qualify any publication for a 3% discount for 6 months on their mailing postage after they get prior approval

## ACP MEMBER BENEFITS



from the USPS. Many of our members and industry participants will say it's too complicated for us to take advantage of! Here's some simple math that may say differently. If a publication has 10,000 mailed pieces per week at only \$.20 per copy, that's \$60.00 per week savings for up to 26 weeks. That's \$1,560 in 2024 that you could deliver right to the bottom line by taking an hour or two to participate in this program. ACP stands ready to help you take advantage of this opportunity with all the connections you will need.

Or how about those of you who are considering adding or expanding your digital offerings to your print advertisers? We have a partnership with January Spring to help train your sales people and provide the total back-end support to get you up and running faster and more effectively. We even share the cost of the first 12 months to make the process affordable as you ramp up your digital sales base. This member

benefit has been added in the last year to meet the changing needs of the community publishing industry.

This list of programs that make you and your people better at what they do, your company more versatile and your publication's position in your market stronger are the cornerstone of what ACP has been doing for over 70 years. Our offerings have evolved as you and the industry has evolved in order to assure we stay on our mission of helping publishers enhance their viability. We understand ACP only exists to help members transition and adjust to the rapidly changing community publishing business and together we successfully evolve.

If you have questions on any of the member benefits or about joining the association, we look forward to talking with you, no charge! Yes, we understand how important the concept of "If it's free, buy it!" is to our success. ■

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# ACP MEMBER BENEFITS OVERVIEW

The Association of Community Publishers (ACP) combines the rich heritage of member benefits from both IFPA and AFCP into one industry leading package for member publications. The programs have been tested, adjusted and refined over the years to continuously meet the needs of community publications and provide the resources to promote the success and growth of members. The following summaries provide an overview of just some of what is available for members through full membership.



## CIRCULATION AUDITS

Circulation audits bring credibility to the community publication industry's deep market penetration. ACP pays for third party audits for qualifying members through Circulation Verification Council (CVC). CVC is an independent, third party reporting audit company auditing thousands of editions nationwide.

The audits cover printing, distribution, circulation, websites, digital editions, mobile, email, social media and combines that with extensive readership studies to give an accurate picture of a publication's reach and market penetration. This member benefit saves publishers thousands of dollars each year, with actual savings varying with circulation size.

CVC audits are available to those members who choose to participate at the level where the audit is included. Those audits are provided for the portion of your circulation that you run the ADS Network ads in and are made available to you as a combined audit. This member benefit alone makes membership value far exceed any associated membership costs.

## JANUARY SPRING & ACP EXCLUSIVE PARTNERSHIP

Exclusive to ACP members, this partnership is designed to give your publication a digital income stream to complement your print products. With \$7 out of \$10 advertising dollars being spent in digital this year, the importance of offering your customers a full market option of print and digital will secure your position as the complete local marketing option.

January Spring does the heavy lifting, while you provide the local feet on the ground and reap the rewards. From pre-sale training all the way

to client contract renewals, January Spring will be there every step of the way to support your sales team.

ACP members can take advantage of a monthly fee 3-way split: The publisher is responsible for \$99, ACP pays \$100 and January Spring covers \$100 for the first year, reducing your startup costs while you implement this important product offering. In addition to reduced implementation costs, January Spring will provide group training programs that allow you to learn with your peers to maximize your product knowledge and support throughout the training process.



## POWER SALES UNIVERSITY & ON DEMAND TRAINING CENTER

At ACP we know that training for your staff is critical to the success of your business, so we strive to provide as many educational programs as possible. In addition to The Leadership Institute, ACP offers several other industry specific sales training programs and materials for you and your staff. You'll find a variety of other training materials on the ACP website, most of which

are free of charge to ACP members! Many of these programs are available on demand and can be viewed from the comfort of your office at your own pace.

The ACP On Demand Training Center offers 24/7 training that can be completed on an individual basis or in a group setting, depending on your needs. It offers both industry specific sales training from The Leadership Institute (TLI) as well as a world-class, general sales training program for your team, brought to you by Power Sales University, all in one place.

For a more comprehensive look into the On-Demand Training Center, see the article on page 20.

# ACP Member Benefit For Your Employees

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Have your student apply for one of four scholarships!

## Scholarship Requirements:

- Parent, guardian or grandparent must work for a community paper that is a current member of the Association of Community Publishers (ACP).
- Applicant must be a high school graduating senior or current college student.
- Applicant must be attending a 4 year college, vocational trade school or community college.
- Application must be received by April 1, 2024



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# MEMBER BENEFITS



The Leadership Institute

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

## PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS AND TLI

The Leadership Institute (TLI) is a member benefit of ACP designed to provide member companies with an opportunity to gain industry specific, professional training certificates. Members have the opportunity to utilize professional certificate programs that address specific areas of management and sales development with both virtual and in-person programs.

Typical management programs have included Effective Hands-on Management, a Coaching Workshop focused on Coaching Skills Inventory and conducting Effective Coaching Conversations, and a session on Creative Leadership. Each program presented training designed to stimulate your thinking, recharge your batteries and spark your outside-the-lines cre-

ativity as you inspire your employees to excellence.

The Associate Advertising Executive Certification (AAE) designed by ACP is offered to recognize the highest level of professionalism and growth for dedicated community publication associates. Industry professionals are able to document their knowledge in all aspects of media and marketing as well as their commitment to professional development being recognized by their national association.

Once professionals have completed the requirements for the AAE Certification and successfully passed the comprehensive examination, there will be an opportunity to earn an advanced certification as a Certified Advertising Executive (CAE).

The requirements for earning the advanced CAE Certification are as follows:

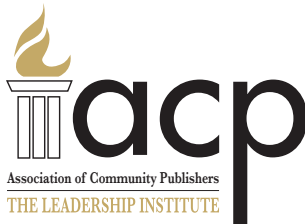
- Successfully obtaining the AAE certification through TLI

(to include meeting the 15 TLI credit minimum and successfully passing the TLI Exam).

- Successful participation in at least three of TLI's Management Certificate Programs:

- ✓ Effective Hands-on Management (2018)
- ✓ Coaching Workshop (2019)
- ✓ Creative Leadership (2021)
- ✓ Motivating, Engaging & Inspiring Employees (2023)
- ✓ THRIVE: Turn Uncertainty Into Your Competitive Advantage (2024)
- ✓ Additional programs to be offered at future events

Your Certified Advertising Executive (CAE) certification will be issued after successful completion of the above requirements. Achievements will be monitored by the ACP Education Committee and submitted to the TLI Institute for certification at the annual conference or other appropriate industry events.



## ACP NEW HIRE SALES TRAINING PROGRAM

The seven class sequence available in the Online Learning Center provides a great way to train incoming sales hires in the basic process of advertising sales. This training is presented utilizing the terminology and delivered from the same perspective they will be dealing with out in the selling situation. Stepping them through the sales call from opening to close, they will have a much better understanding of the key elements to successful sales calls.

The Class Sequence Consists of:

- TLI-104 Opening a Sales Dialogue
- TLI-106 Effective Questioning
- TLI-105 Communicating Through Listening
- TLI-107 Making Recommendations Using Features & Benefits
- TLI-103 Answering the Classic Sales Objections

- TLI-101 Closing the Sale
- TLI-108 Four Essentials of an Effective Advertising Campaign

Take advantage of this class sequence for new hires while utilizing the podcast library available on the ACP website. This aids the ability to help target specific areas of training or answer specific questions involved in the sales process. These tools can be instrumental in a new salesperson's ultimate success as well as providing a professional sales component to your training program.

All you have to do is go to the On Demand Training Center now and complete your personal registration. ACP Members in good standing can contact the ACP office for their participation key to enable them to access the new hire training sequence of classes as well as all the sales training available as part of our partnership with Power Sales University. This member benefit of ACP is supported by the association in order to assure the highest quality industry specific and general sales training is available to its members. With the online delivery of the class material – the training is accessible on a schedule that works for every member's needs.



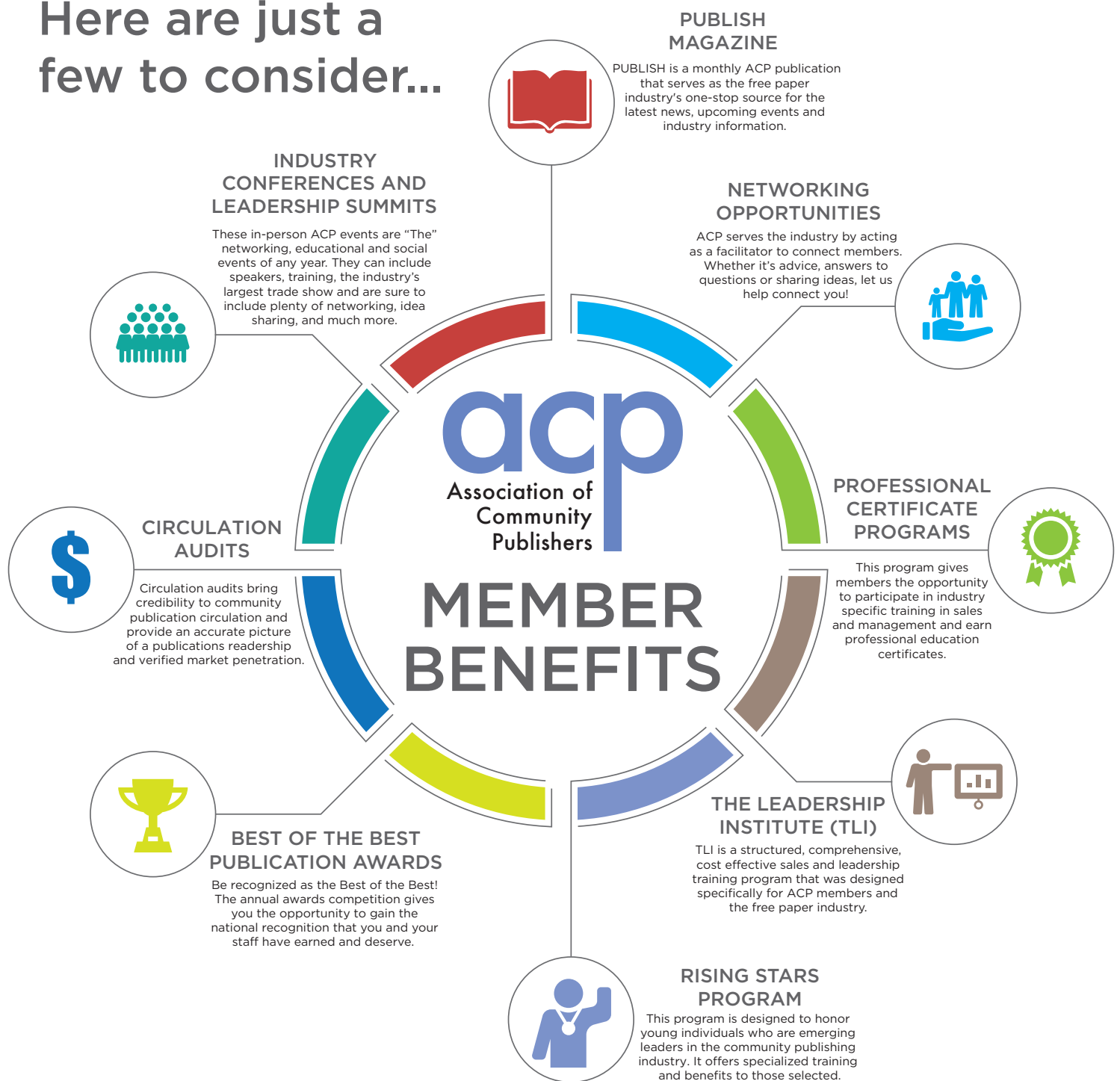
## VIRTUAL SESSIONS

### VIRTUAL EVENTS

ACP's Virtual Events provide an opportunity for members to learn, share and network with other industry professionals without the expenses or time requirements of travel. The virtual format offers an exceptionally convenient and cost effective alternative for many members. These events have included TLI sales classes, leadership roundtables, topic driven management presentations, editorial workshops and graphics educational sessions.

# Are you taking full advantage of all your member benefits?

Here are just a few to consider...



**Providing the tools and support needed for your publications to be more successful.**

**Not a member...join today! 877-203-2327 or [communitypublishers.com](http://communitypublishers.com)**





## Publication Awards

### “BEST OF THE BEST” ANNUAL PUBLICATION AWARDS

This is your company’s opportunity to get some recognition for all the exceptional efforts that go into producing the highest quality publications. Use your success story and individual awards to promote your company, your staff and your customers. These awards can help boost everything from employee job satisfaction to your company’s reputation in your local market.

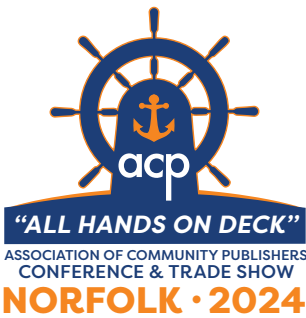
With over 35 different award categories to enter, regardless of your publication’s style, you will be competing against like publications. Everything from editorial material, individual ad designs, cover designs, special sections, promotional materials and digital products can be entered and judged against other entries from across North America.

Award winners are announced each year during a special on-line presentation! Each winning publication receives a presentation quality certificate detailing their awards for the current year for display in their office. Many of our winners have special celebrations to honor these accomplishments by their staff and recognize the ex-

traordinary efforts that go into producing a quality publication.

The awards program is open to all ACP members and typically draws over 1,400 entries from a major portion of our membership. The entries are submitted through a specially designed online portal in January each year and represent work produced throughout the previous calendar year. For a list of categories and participation rules, download the 2024 Best of the Best Entry Forms available at: <https://www.communitypublishers.com/best-of-the-best>.

Remember – this is the perfect opportunity to...**Reward Your Customers, Reward Your Staff and Reward Yourself!**



### IN-PERSON EVENTS

The best way to explain this ACP Member Benefit’s value is to let some members who have experienced ACP events first hand explain it in their own words.

*“The Conference is a very productive event packed into 3 days. A short time away to learn and network. You will get ideas and contacts to carry you through the entire year.”*

*“The Learning Experience is really good. But, the conversations you have with other people in the business that are going through or have overcome the same business experiences and obstacles is really great.”*

*“It is a chance to get away from your business and gain a new perspective, learn new ideas from speakers, or networking with fellow attendees, a chance to sharpen your saw – get training and knowledge in new areas of expertise. The fellowship is amazing!”*

*“This conference is not only packed with continuing education sessions specific to your daily operations, but you’ll rub elbows with many of the best minds in our business who are incredibly generous in sharing their knowledge. I would add that it’s always a tremendously enjoyable time.”*

*“This is a must attend conference!”*

*Not only do you have a chance to network in a comfortable atmosphere but the education is top notch and relevant.”*

*“You can generate great revenue making ideas to implement in your own paper from people who are currently proving they work. Everyone who attends has great ideas and they are willing to share!”*

This year’s annual conference is coming up May 1-3 in the beautiful waterfront city of Norfolk, Virginia and the Fall Leadership Retreat will be in Phoenix (watch for details)! Both settings make for the perfect opportunity to relax and enjoy networking with your fellow participants in the community publication industry. Many members will tell you this is the MOST valuable member benefit ACP has if to offer, members just need to embrace the opportunity.

# Publish

## PUBLISH MAGAZINE

*Publish Magazine* is produced monthly by ACP and provides relevant news and information across the community publishing industry. *Publish* is distributed to owners, publishers, general managers and community paper industry associates free of charge with a current circulation of about 1,400 copies monthly. Keeping both our members informed on current events as well as the rest of the industry, assures everyone the opportunity to stay connected.

*Publish* is your key to keeping up on the latest news, developments and

opportunities throughout this rapidly changing industry. A monthly source of answers to your questions or solutions to common issues makes this an invaluable resource for our members.

- **Industry Specific News** – Keep track of the people, organizations and publishing companies who are making the news across the country.
- **Current Events** – Stay informed on all the industry events to ensure you take advantage of every opportunity to participate in helping shape your future.
- **Association Business** – *Publish* also serves as the ACP member newsletter with updates on member benefits, conference plans and all official notifications.

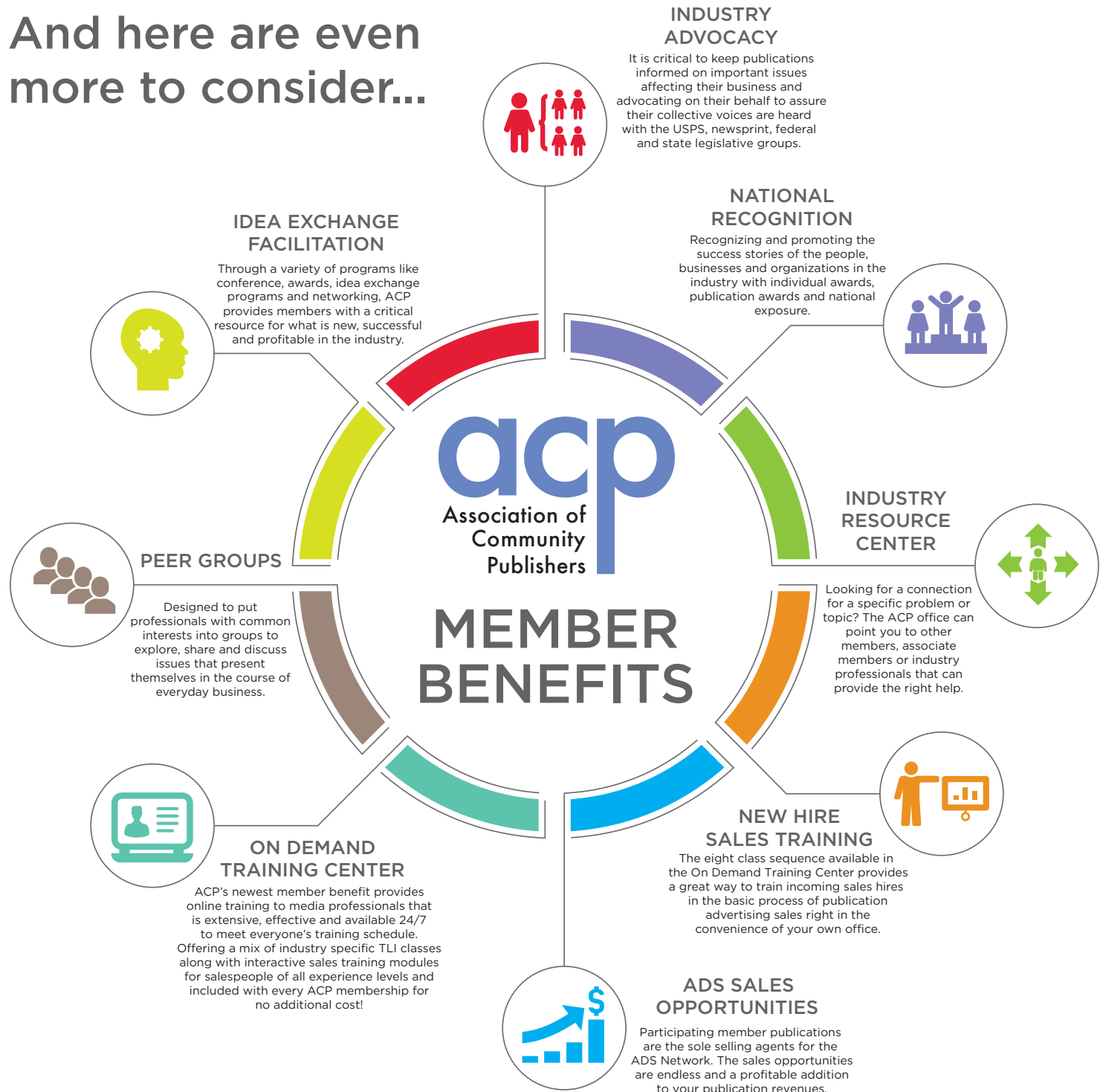
- **Educational Articles** – Content centered on industry related topics covering graphics, software, technology and other areas that apply to operations efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Delivery Developments** – From the USPS to the auditing firms that document our delivery, *Publish* is a consistent source of this essential and ever changing component of the publishing process.

In addition, *Publish* helps keep the national business and supplier network informed on the community publication industry, it’s developments and current events. The quality of the publication and it’s content continually focus on promoting the members and the industry’s best image on the national stage.

# Again we ask you...

## Are you taking full advantage of all your member benefits?

And here are even more to consider...



**To get your publications on the growth track, call the ACP office about becoming a member today.**

Association of Community Publishers 877-203-2327



## RISING STARS PROGRAM

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 ongoing program recognizes up to 7 individuals each year who represent the best of our up and coming industry professionals from nominees submitted by our member publications. These individuals exemplify good character, leadership, and professionalism not only at work, but in the communities they serve.

These young professionals demonstrate the promise of and a commitment to impacting their publications as well as the community publication industry in a positive manner through professional achievements. They not only perform their jobs to a high standard, but they also have a commitment to furthering their knowledge and abilities through participation in this national program.

Award recipients are recognized in *Publish*, the official publication of ACP and participate in an awards presentation program at the ACP Annual Conference and Trade Show. They are privileged to receive free conference registration, conference meal plans, specialized training sessions and up to \$500 in travel reimbursements as part of their ongoing active participation.

The ACP Rising Stars program does not end with this initial recognition program as Rising Stars are asked to assist the various initiatives of the association on an ongoing basis for up to three years as part of their commitment to the program. ACP recognizes that we have much to learn from these talented young people and desires to use their skills to help us shape the community publication industry going forward. In return for this participation in regularly scheduled conference calls and for volunteering their time to assist with all ACP initiatives, ACP provides additional leadership development training and the opportunity to attend a total of three conferences for additional professional development.

## BOB WRIGHT MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIPS



that is a current member of ACP

ACP presents The Bob Wright Memorial Scholarships annually in May. Any parent, grandparent or guardian who is working for a community paper

is eligible to apply for one of our annual scholarships for their graduate. This endowment scholarship was created in memory of longtime publisher and friend of the industry, Bob Wright. Bob served on numerous boards of directors as he guided the direction and success of several publishing associations and his own publications. This is one way he continues to give back to the industry in his absence.



## INDUSTRY ADVOCACY

ACP works hard to monitor events, developments, trends and opportunities that effect members of the community publication industry. Materials costs, USPS changes and discounts, pending legislation that impacts printers and publishers, and so many other important areas of interest all get close attention. Looking back over the previous months, here are just a few of the issues we have worked to keep industry members aware of, up to date on and their voices heard:

- **Government Regulations** – From litter laws to state sales tax issues, ACP provides information updates to members via emails to make sure they are aware of pending legislation or regulations that could impact their businesses. During the covid crisis, we facilitated member discussions to make sure eligible companies could take advantage of resources like the PPP loans that were introduced.
- **Newsprint Tariffs** – In response to the proposed tariffs on Canadian newsprint suppliers, ACP endorsed a coalition of printers and publishers called STOPP to oppose the proposed countervailing duties. Through a series

of email blasts, legislative contact initiatives and collective industry support, the efforts eventually resulted in the International Trade Commission terminating the duties being applied to uncoated groundwood.

- **USPS Rate Changes** – Our partnership with the Saturation Mailers Coalition helps us monitor changes within the USPS rates, processes and procedures as a critical aspect of many members extensive reliance on USPS delivery for their publications. Keeping members informed as well as coordinating a larger voice for our members is essential to the economic well-being of the industry.
- **USPS Available Discounts** – Coordinating the efforts and materials necessary to take advantage of discounts available with the Emerging and Advanced Technologies Promotion. By developing an augmented reality ad program partnered with the non-profit service animal training group, Paws With A Cause, members utilizing Marketing Mail can qualify for a 3% discount on their postage for a 6 month promotion period. This discount is available within the Mobil Shopping Promotion offered by the USPS for postage savings to qualifying publications. These recent examples are just several of the many ways we represent and connect industry members with the national and state business worlds in the promotion of their interests and economic importance within their respective communities.

## ON DEMAND TRAINING

# ACP'S ON DEMAND TRAINING CENTER

ARE YOU READY TO TAKE YOUR SALES TO THE NEXT LEVEL?  
IF SO, YOU REALLY NEED TO BE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THIS FREE ACP MEMBER BENEFIT.

The past few years have been hard on everyone. We understand that in many cases, it is no longer feasible for publishers to bring their sales team to the annual conference or other in-person events for training. ACP has developed a way to bring the training to you! The On Demand Training Center offers 24/7 access to sales training that can be completed on an individual basis or in a group setting, depending on your needs. It offers both industry specific sales training from The Leadership Institute (TLI) as well as a world-class, general sales training program for your team, brought to you by Power Sales University, all in one place.

In partnering with PSU, ACP is able to update and completely refresh the current TLI material, add additional industry specific content through the TLI program and enhance the collection of training videos to increase our online offerings. In addition to the TLI material, we are now able to offer you over 130 interactive sales training modules from the Power Sales University platform. Regardless of prior experience or training, this program guides you through every critical aspect of sales methodology in a short, easily digestible, and actionable way for you to immediately implement in the field the techniques you learn. It will also give you access to a series of videos where the sales trainer has videoed himself on a live sales call.

The PSU material is designed with flexibility in mind so you can either have your sales team work individually at their own pace, or, if you choose, it can be used for training in a team setting, giving you the cues to stop for discussion with your team at certain points. This could come in handy for those who conduct sales meetings on a regular basis. You also have the ability to assign training to specific users, create teams in the platform, manage users and receive notifications upon completion of assignments for your staff if desired. These are just a few examples of the wide range of tools the new On Demand Training Center will

offer. Another great feature is that the PSU modules are short – most of them are less than 20 minutes in length.

As for the TLI side, we have a great training series for new hires or salespeople who are just beginning a sales training program. This is a series of 8 classes with Rob Zarrilli, our TLI Dean, which are very specific to the industry. They run through the basics of the sales process, specifically relating to advertising sales. These TLI training videos are a little bit longer, averaging about an hour each. As we launch the new platform, we will have a few other higher level TLI classes available as well, and we will continue to add to that library over time. Our goal is to add additional industry specific training for a range of other departments including graphics and editorial in the future, also.

Whether you're using the TLI training or the PSU training, you will be sure to find something for everyone. From the salesperson on their first day in the field, to the most seasoned sales professional, no matter what level you are, you will take something away from this training.

As mentioned earlier, this will be a growing library of content as we continue to add material to the site and PSU continues to expand as well. One of the best features of this new member benefit is the convenience that it provides. With short sessions and the flexibility to train at your own pace, these programs can easily fit into anyone's schedule.

In the process of evaluating this program initially, we asked Jane Quairoli of Kapp Advertising Service to give the site a "trial run" for us. Jane serves as an ACP Board Member and also on the Education & Training Committee, so she has been as close to this project as anyone. Jane and her sales team have been using the site for months now, so we asked Jane to share her overall opinion based on her experience and here is what she had to say:

*"I've been through an extensive amount of training in 37+ years at Kapp, but I am so excited about this. I wish I would have had the PSU train-*

*ing modules when I first started. While not industry specific, everything I have viewed can be applied in our industry. I often "rewind" the video to hear a great point over again & have watched a few twice. As for the TLI training class videos, I can't say enough about Rob's TLI courses. I have always enjoyed TLI training. This site is the best of both worlds."*

This training benefit is available to all current ACP members in good standing at no cost, saving you thousands of dollars a year. You have nothing to lose! Contact the ACP office at 877.203.2327 to get started today. You have the option of setting up your sales team yourself or we can provide you with a link that you simply email to your staff, and they can follow the process to set themselves up in the system. We will also have training videos available for both managers and salespeople to make it as easy as possible to get started.

We are confident that if you commit to giving the ACP On Demand Training Center a try, it will be well worth your time investment and benefit you and your staff in many ways.



Testimonial Video Link:  
<https://vimeo.com/766959425/68feb33c4f>



QR Code – Sample Training Video Link:  
<https://vimeo.com/762311039/df6dc818ac>

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### LinkedIn – Article

#### Why join a Trade Association?

By Sharon Mughal

This quick read article does a nice overview of the benefits of joining a trade association. If you're not sure if ACP membership is for you, it is well worth the read.

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/why-join-trade-association-sharon-mughal>



### FreshBooks – Blog Article

#### Get Out There: 9 Reasons to Join an Industry Organization

By Deanna deBara

This article goes deeper into specifics of why you need to consider industry associations, outlining 9 ways you and your business can benefit from participation.

<https://www.freshbooks.com/blog/join-industry-association>



### Newsweek – Website Article

#### Small Business Benefits: Why You Should Be Networking

By Tammy Sons

Great review of 5 reasons small businesses need to be networking with other professionals in similar industries. It also offers some great pointers on how to kick-start that business network.

<https://www.newsweek.com/small-business-benefits-why-you-should-networking-1839175>



### PREGAME – Website Article

#### Working ON Your Business vs Working IN Your Business

Pro Tip / By Ciara

Thought provoking read on the critical difference between getting caught up spending all your time working IN your business and neglecting time spent working ON your business. Give a 3 step process for adding working ON your business to your schedule.

<https://pregamehq.com/working-on-your-business-vs-working-in-your-business/>



### Newest addition for your “Advertiser Help Page” Listings

### MANSI Media – Website Article

#### The Benefits of Combining Print & Digital Advertising

This article makes a solid case for why print and digital are like peanut butter and jelly – they work best when put together! This quick read details several important reasons advertisers need to utilize both to maximize their effectiveness.

<https://mansimedia.com/the-benefits-of-combining-print-digital-advertising/>



## A WALK DOWN MEMORY LANE

# GARY RUDY – A LIFE WITHOUT REGRETS

BY AL CAMPBELL

Former longtime Herald General Manager Gary Rudy, who is now at home on hospice care, looks back on his 84 years of life.

JANUARY 8, 2024 • RIO GRANDE –

**G**ary Rudy. Say his name; seemingly everybody knows him in Cape May County and many worldwide.

The man, born in Verona, Pennsylvania, on March 27, 1939, made his mark in the weekly newspaper business and in retail sales.

He is the personification of the Herald newspaper: An affable chap wearing a trademark Western hat and an impish smile. He loves nature and surrounds himself with like-minded folks.

His residence, a log cabin in the Shannon Oaks neighborhood in Rio Grande, exemplifies his love of the outdoors. He has hunted bears, deer, and other furry creatures and fished in New Jersey, Alaska, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, off Cuba, Canada's Yukon, and many secret places.

On one of the cabin's walls, across from a huge fireplace, hangs a cherished International Game Fish Association plaque.

Under a replica of the fish, that document attests to Rudy's world-record catch of a 10-pound, 4-ounce weakfish on a 4-pound test line, 5 miles off the coast of Cape May on July 6, 1980. The record remains to the present. He cherishes that catch above all others.

### NOT ENOUGH HOURS

Rudy told this reporter that his late wife, Bea, once told him, "You've been gone eight nights out of the past week." Her comment underscores the active life he pursued outside the office: "I held every office in the Rio Grande Fire Company except the president of the Ladies Auxiliary," he joked in a Jan. 6 interview.

### FIREFIGHTER, COMMISSIONER, PLANNING BOARD MEMBER

Those 54 years of fire service included volunteering as a firefighter, lieu-

tenant, captain, assistant chief, chief, and fire district commissioner.

In the latter office, he held posts of secretary and treasurer and served 32 years on the commission.

### THE HERALD FIRE

As captain, Rudy recalled the summer night in 1988 when his in-laws were visiting. He had switched off the device that notified volunteers of calls. However, when he heard the siren, he raced to the firehouse, got on his gear, and jumped into the cab.

He only learned from the driver that his beloved workplace, the Herald, was ablaze. As one of his proudest achievements, Rudy recalled that the next edition of the Herald, compiled from his garage and car, was 100 pages.

### TREES SPARED, SIGNS LIMITED

Rudy also served for 30 years on the Middle Township Planning Board. During his tenure, he noted the passage of ordinances meant to save specimen trees and prevent the municipality from "looking like Tilton Road" with too many signs.

Observing the present direction of the township in those areas, Rudy wondered if those ordinances were still being enforced due to the flagrant violations he'd witnessed.

### WHAT WAS MOST IMPORTANT?

Without hesitation, Rudy answered what was most important in his life: "I've met two presidents and been involved with a lot of big politicians," he said.

He was on the stage when President John F. Kennedy spoke words of inspiration in their native tongue to the people of Berlin, Germany: "All free men, wherever they may live, are citizens of Berlin, and, therefore, as a free



Gary retires as IFPA executive director in September 2014 as he looks forward to "Hooking his next big fish!"

man, I take pride in the words, 'Ich bin ein Berliner.'"

He also met President Bill Clinton.

"They were exciting things," he said with a smile.

### SUCCESSFUL CAREERS

"I have had three unbelievable, successful careers," said Rudy. "Money doesn't mean everything, but the money was good along with it. Regardless of where I was, I always had the uncanny ability to surround myself with good people," he continued.

Those three careers were:

G.C. Murphy and Co., where he began about 1960 "dressing windows" in stores in western Pennsylvania.

Later, he managed stores in Cape May County, including G.C. Murphy Company in Wildwood and Murphy-Mart in Court House.

It was there that Rudy met Art Hall, publisher of the Herald. Murphy-Mart was one of the largest advertisers in the newspaper then, and Hall would meet Rudy weekly to pick up the following week's advertisement.

Rudy was beginning to weary of the merchandising hassles with the chain.

The Herald: He voiced his sentiment to Hall, who offered him a job selling advertising for the Herald.

That was about 1985, he recalled, and he was on the escalator to more significant titles at the newspaper.

He went from sales to advertising director, to general manager, then vice president.

Rudy and the Herald's late editor, Joe Zelnik, hatched the idea of Spout Off. That feature permits readers to write complaints, praises, and everything in between anonymously.

At the outset, it was feared the feature would end letters to the editor, but that fear proved unfounded.

"Sometimes, I regretted it, but our publisher and his wife don't," Rudy said. Many readers flip to Spout Off before reading the rest of the publication.

He offered one idea for Spout Off: Put all political comments in one section.

"Take them out of the regular Spout Off. It's overloaded with 'I hate Trump' and 'I hate Biden.' I don't want to waste my time reading that," he said.

IFPA Exec: Having made the Herald a landmark free publication in South Jersey, Rudy became active in the Independent Free Papers of America (IFPA).

After his employment ended with the Herald, Rudy was hired as executive director of IFPA at a meeting in St. Louis, Missouri.

At the time, the organization, which includes free newspapers in the USA and Canada, had about 40 member newspapers back then. Its number grew to over 300, under his tenure, he said.

"I was all over the country with IFPA," said Rudy. "They asked me, 'Could you write in a nutshell the job description for the executive director?'" he recalled.

"I wrote the job description. They said, 'How much is that going to cost us?' So, I wrote it down and slid it across the table, and they hired me."

### SUCCESS AND HOTEL LIVING

For 22 years, Rudy shuttled across North America. He arranged conventions and seminars and grew accustomed to living out of a suitcase.

Rudy admits that while he enjoyed traveling, particularly in airports and on airplanes, for a while, the transient life eventually "got old."

"I was sitting in a plane one day, and there goes my bag, which rode away. I said to the stewardess, 'They took my bag away.' She replied, 'It was either get rid of the bags or people.'"

The airline lost his luggage on a flight to Minnesota, where he enjoyed ice fishing. "I was out in the boon-docks by the time they found my luggage, then, they couldn't find me," he laughed.

After that debacle, he bought two suits at Macy's in the Mall of America, in Bloomington, Minnesota.

However, when he landed in Philadelphia on the way home, he returned the suits to Macy's in the Deptford Mall. "I didn't like the color," Rudy said.



Gary always believed family was the most important.

### RUDY'S RODS

Rudy's love of fly fishing is legendary. Many camping trips to the Poconos were taken with young "runners" of the Herald. They were the people who, especially in summer when the Herald's circulation was highest, would deliver bundles from the truck to stores.

Rudy judged about 10 of those young proteges had become fly fishermen because of their early days in the Delaware River and other freshwater rivers.

That love of casting for elusive fish resulted in Rudy establishing a small business called Rudy's Rods.

Lovers of the sport would ask Rudy for a specific type of custom-made rod. Some had ornate feather arrangements and similar designs.

Rudy said that he made over 300 rods and sent them to various parts of the globe. His side job was reported in a Scandinavian magazine, with color photos of his handiwork.

His rods included "everything from deep-sea, bamboo, fly rods and regular rods. Whatever the customer wanted. Some of those bamboo rods went to Alaska and bought me some nice (fishing) trips," he said.

### HO HO HO

Estimating how many Christmas wishes were told to "Santa" (aka Rudy) over 57 years would be impossible. He proudly points to a photo enlargement in his living room of the whiskered gentleman from the North Pole. The one he pointed to was snapped while Santa stopped in Menz Restaurant in Rio Grande some years ago.

### A NATURAL MC

For many years, Middle Township Halloween and Christmas parades were narrated by Rudy from the judging stand. His rye sense of humor always



Gary didn't seek awards but they always seemed to find him. Here is Gary receiving the 2014 Herb Campbell Award from SAPA.

brought laughter to those who lined the sidewalks to watch the line of march.

### SORRY, NOT INTERESTED

During his years of public service, Rudy said he was approached several times by Republicans and Democrats to run for elected office. Each time, he refused their offers and instead elected to remain on the perimeter where he could express his opinions.

### THE LOVE OF HIS LIFE

Bea K. Rudy was Gary's soul mate until her passing on Nov 13, 2016.

According to her obituary from Radzieta Funeral Home, in Court House, "Bea was the loving and devoted wife of Gary Rudy for 52 years. They were not only man, wife, and best friends but worked side by side all those 52 years at G.C. Murphy Company in Wildwood, Murphy's Mart in Cape May Court House, The Cape May County Herald, and the Independent Free Papers of America both in Rio Grande. They were fortunate to have been able to frequently travel throughout the U.S. and around the world. Her favorite destination was Hawaii, where she visited over 15 times."

### IN HOSPICE CARE

Rudy freely admits he has "no regrets" about his life.

At present, he is at home on hospice care with cancer.

"I made my peace with the Lord," he said.

In his sunset days, he remembers the people he had the pleasure to have met over 84 years and the lives who were touched by the man so many simply call "Gary." ■

*Reprinted with permission from the Cape May County Herald*

# CALLING ALL RISING STARS

(A TESTIMONY AND APPEAL TO FUTURE STARS)



BY NATHANIEL ABRAHAM III –  
ACP RISING STAR

This year will mark my 4th and final year being part of ACP’s Rising Stars program (I got to enjoy an extra year thanks to the pandemic) and it has been a great experience that I would recommend to any and all who are curious. I am blessed to get the opportunity to interact with and learn from peers in the same industry from all over the United States, all of whom are quite brilliant. John Draper and Cassey Recore have been invaluable in leading and organizing our group and giving us young professionals opportunities to “Shine like Stars” within ACP.

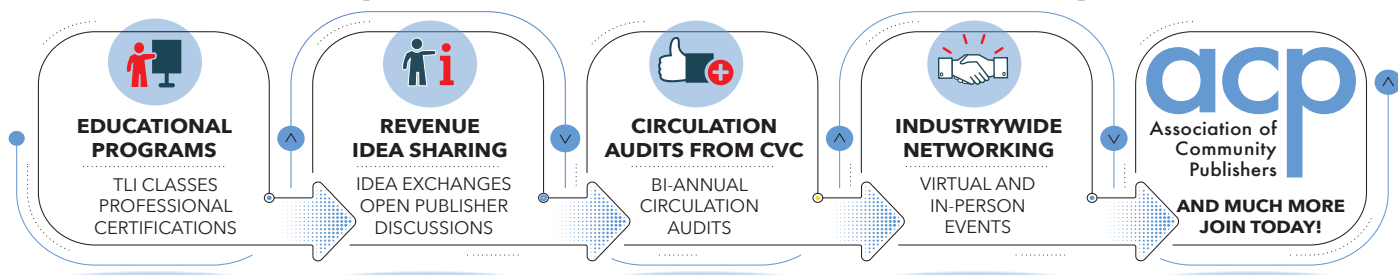
I particularly enjoy the feeling of taking away a new perspective or idea from our monthly discussion calls. Each meeting we get to enjoy a hearty conversation on a relevant topic of choice lead by one of us. We’ve talked about everything from brain-teasers and workplace leadership skills to the impending A.I. takeover and its potential effects on our industry. Every meeting hosts a riveting discussion with ideas and thoughts from a diverse group of peers who share their experiences and perspectives.

In addition, our virtual sessions, the Rising Star sessions at confer-

ences each year, have been quite a learning experience. The first time I attended an ACP conference in 2021 is something I will not forget. I was enthralled by the keynote speaker, Holly Hoffman, telling her exhilarating tale of surviving Survivor. It was quite exciting to get to talk and learn from her along with my fellow stars. This past year, we were treated to group conversation with Mr. Tom Silvestri, who shared his vast wisdom from being in the industry for over 40 years and always had a great story ready to tell at a moment’s notice. Each conference I’ve gone to as a Rising Star has been simply awesome.

In these past few years of participating, I have learned so much about the industry, the ACP organization, and the people within it. It has given me an opportunity to be active within the organization and to feel at home with the ACP community. It has also given me new knowledge and skills which I’ve been able to integrate into my day-to-day work. Rising Stars has been a priceless experience in my career, and it is my wish to see this program continue and grow so that future young industry professionals will enjoy this opportunity as well. ■

## Membership has its benefits - benefits you need!



Association of Community Publishers - 877-203-2327



# ELEVEN HABITS OF HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL SALES PROFESSIONALS

BY WALTER ROGERS – PRESIDENT AND CEO, BAKER COMMUNICATION

There is probably no more competitive or potentially lucrative profession than sales. Of course, the work is not easy: the hours are long, dealing with the unique expectations of customers and sales managers can be frustrating, and the pressure to perform and drive revenue is relentless. For these reasons – and many more I could enumerate – selling isn’t for everyone. If there is one master theme that defines highly successful sales professionals, it is their focus on continually elevating their performance by identifying and deploying best practices in all aspects of their business, in order to effectively overcome these obstacles day after day and call after call.

It is quite possible that there are more books, videos, training seminars and websites devoted to improving sales performance than to any other business-related topic. At Baker Communications, we have more than 30 years of experience in helping strengthen the sales performance of many of the world’s top sales organizations, having impacted over 1,000,000 sales professionals during our history.

Here is a summary of the habits we [teach in our training]:

## 1. Get in the habit of asking yourself, “How can I help?” Instead of, “What can I sell?”

Highly effective sales professionals differentiate themselves from the average sales pro right from the beginning by the perspective they have regarding their customers. For any sales pro, the pressure to sell and close the deal is very strong; almost all-consuming. For this reason, they tend to view their customers as means to an end. It is like there is a voice in the back of their heads saying, “If I can sell this customer something today, I can still make quota for this month.” In a way that is slightly counterintuitive, highly successful sales pros tend to approach customers from a very different direction; instead of asking themselves, “What can I sell this customer?” they are asking,

“How can I help this customer?” This difference in perspective is quickly obvious to the customer, and this simple shift can lay the foundation for a long-term business relationship.

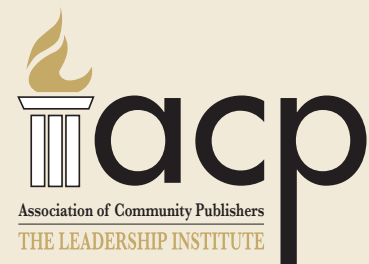
## 2. Get in the habit of asking more questions and listening more carefully

If there is one mistake that typical sales pros make with customers on a daily basis, it is assuming that they know more than they really do about the customer’s situation and the solution that will best meet their needs. Because the typical sales pro is focused on the wrong internal question (“What can I sell?”) they tend to only ask enough questions to set up the offer they already intended to make before they even called the customer. This shallow approach will almost always cause the pro to leave money on the table, not to mention risk losing the opportunity altogether. Highly successful sales professionals come prepared to ask a comprehensive set of questions and then listen carefully and analytically to each answer so they will know how they can best help the customer and offer solutions that have real value.

## 3. Get in the habit of selling value over price

Because of the relentless pressure to drive revenue and close business, all sales pros are very familiar with the temptation to discount or give ground on other terms and conditions in order to win the business. With the customer right there dangling the deal carrot, and the end of the month closing in fast, most sales pros will take the money and run, especially in a down economy, even if it means giving up margin to do it. Highly successful sales pros understand that their company relies on margins and brand reputation to maintain viability in the market place. They also know that customer are more than willing to pay a premium for extra value, if only the sales pro will take the time to connect the value dots back to the customer needs.

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## 4. Get in the habit of being flexible and creative

It is often said that customers don’t buy products, they buy solutions. This is where the average sales pro falls down, because average sales pros are too focused on selling products. Even in the most commoditized industries, highly successful sales professionals understand that when you can create options that are aligned with the customer’s needs, you can make your product a part of a larger solution which the customer will find more appealing. Never hesitate to explore ideas and options that are outside of the box.

## **5. Get in the habit of building relationships across the customer organization**

In a typical sales process, the focus is generally on identifying the decision maker and doing whatever you can to get in front of them with your offer. Certainly, it is true that it is hard to close a deal without the support of the decision maker. However, in most organizations, the decision maker is connected to and supported by a larger network, at least consisting of a gatekeeper and probably others. Highly successful sales professionals never underestimate the need to build relationships and trust with the larger network in order to gain insights into the organization and create credibility for their offer when they finally get in front of the decision maker.

## **6. Get in the Habit of Setting Goals**

Typical sales pros too often let their pipelines set their agenda, doing the best they can to follow up on whatever leads fall into their laps and working hard to close whatever business they can however it comes to them. By contrast, highly successful sales professionals are outcome-driven. They define what they want to accomplish through a series of measurable goals, and they plan their customer strategies and activities to focus on achieving those outcomes. They certainly use pipeline as a guide and a resource, but they also refine and prioritize that pipeline in order to achieve the outcomes they are aiming for. For highly successful sales pros, time and territory management is not a buzz phrase used in sales meetings, it is a focused planning tool that defines what accounts they will pursue, and when and how they will pursue them. If at any point they determine that their activities are not meeting their goals, they quickly revise, reload, and start all over again. They never waste time on activities that don't produce immediate, measurable results.

## **7. Get in the habit of regularly, honestly measuring results**

Some average sales pros can't handle the truth. They are uncomfortable with pipeline reviews and evaluation sessions unless they have had a good month and the forecast is positive. When the numbers are off, they feel like failures and their anxiety level goes way up. Highly successful sales professionals understand that the secret to success is in the numbers – good or bad – because those numbers always have something to teach us. Are the

numbers up? Good, find out why and keep leveraging that for more success. Are the numbers down? Don't panic, find out why and fix it. Highly successful sales professionals measure everything, not just the value of the deals at the end of the month. Quantifying and evaluating every sales activity with every customer will help uncover the truth and point the way to more success in a way that simply counting the money can never do.

## **8. Get in the habit of cultivating commitment**

Typical sales pros are excited (and a little relieved) whenever they close a deal. Highly successful sales professionals are usually just as glad, but they understand something that a lot of less successful sales pros don't realize: closing the deal is simply one step along the road to even greater success if they will only stay committed to following through with this customer.

Highly successful sales professionals spend 10% of their resources educating the universe, promoting the business to the community at large. They spend 30% of their time cultivating relationship with prospective customers. But they spend a whopping 60% of their time and creative energy continuing to cultivate trust and explore opportunities with existing customers. It costs five times as much to sell a new customer as it does to make the same sale to an existing customer. Typically, the 10th purchase from an existing customer is 80% larger than the first purchase. For this reason, successful sales professionals will stay in regular contact with their existing customers to make sure that the solution they bought is working well, and to quickly address any questions or problems that arise. They treat customers more like friends than as sources of revenue. Somehow, it always pays off.

## **9. Get in the habit of maintaining a positive attitude**

We have already pointed out that selling can be a tough business. When the economy is down or the deals aren't closing as well as forecasted, sales pros start hearing a lot of "Nos," which can be devastating at times. It is not unusual for the average sales pro to lower their aspirations, and begin to doubt their abilities at times like this. Highly successful sales pros, however, don't allow temporary setbacks to define them. Instead, their confidence in themselves, as well as in the organization they represent and the value they have to offer serves as an anchor to steady them.

Their unique blend of confidence, optimism, and enthusiasm, even in the face of short-term challenges, drives them to look for opportunities when others are making excuses.

## **10. Get in the habit of doing all things with integrity**

There is a slightly uncomfortable dynamic that seems to run in the background of many relationships between customer and sales pro. Most customers don't like being "sold to," so they can be a little bit closed and even suspicious early in a sales relationship. To overcome this resistance, sales pros sometimes feel the need to resort to subtle forms of manipulation to help close deals. Unfortunately, the sales pro may win a few deals this way, but he is not likely to win many long-term customers. Highly successful sales professionals realize that it takes openness, honesty, and a distinct lack of self-interest deployed over time to create the level of trust with a customer necessary to build a solid relationship. This includes not only delivering great products and services on time and as promised, but it also includes stepping up to the plate and working with the customer to fix problems quickly and without making excuses.

## **11. Get in the habit of continually learning and developing your skills**

The sales field is full of people who consider themselves to be experts. They have many years of experience and they have amassed a great amount of product knowledge. In spite of that, many of them consistently underperform, and in many cases this problem is caused by the fact that the sales pro believes himself to be such an expert that he doesn't feel any need to expand his skill set or learn anything new. This not only leads to complacency, it also leads to the real possibility that the sales pro will be passed up by other people who constantly sharpen their skills and leverage new technologies to create advantages where others find obstacles. We call these other people, "highly successful sales professionals." ■

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# DO YOU HAVE A SALES PREVENTION DEPARTMENT?



BY JOHN FOUST  
RALEIGH, NC

Every business has procedures in need of tweaking. Do any of those procedures at your newspaper involve the advertising department? It might be a good idea to take a look.

I remember a Monday night long ago when my cable TV stopped working. I called the customer service line and went through the frustrating process of getting a real person on the line. That person was nice, but said they couldn't do anything about my cable until Thursday. Between Monday and Thursday, I received at least six automated messages to remind me of the appointment.

On Thursday, I made plans to be home to meet the service tech. When he arrived, he quickly determined that the cable box needed to be replaced. He retrieved a new box from his truck and installed it in a couple of minutes. Then the real trouble started. He couldn't activate the box until he received authorization from the cable company. As he explained it, the box which he had just connected to the TV had to be transferred in their records from the company's inventory to his truck's inventory to my TV. He submitted that request, but they couldn't make the switch right away because he had to wait his turn.

He was a nice fellow. As we sat in the kitchen and waited, he talked about his work, his family and his children's interests. Along the way, he mentioned that he liked his job, but that he spent most of his time waiting for the home office to authorize the equipment he installed.

After an hour of waiting, I tried to help by placing a call to customer service. When I eventually got someone on the line, I explained the

problem and handed the phone to the technician. The customer service rep said she would look into the problem. But after more waiting, the tech decided to call another technician to see if he had a cable box that had already gone through an inventory switch. The new tech showed up a little later, and luckily that box worked.

The end result was that he was there for three hours to do twenty minutes of work, he was over an hour late for his next appointment, and – worst of all – he said it was an ordinary day.

The story doesn't end there. About an hour after the technician left, I received another automated phone call to remind me of the appointment.

Everyone I encountered was genuinely concerned about my problem, but they were limited by a faulty internal system.

I'm reporting this experience in excruciating detail to illustrate the negative chain of events that can result from a flawed process. I've run across some newspapers with similar system defects. In fact, I once heard of an office that had such a stringent credit process that people referred to it as the "sales prevention department."

The challenge is to find problems and fix them. If you do that, you'll become a customer service hero. ■

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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 © 02/2024

I created many small space ads throughout the years... mostly 2 by 2" ads. The most challenging, however, were the 1-column ads. How to get the message across in a tall, skinny format... effectively. To that end, this article hopefully helps to not only deal with the size, but to also make them stand out on the page. The challenge is to see what can be done with the information.

The first two ads below are totally different, yet there are similarities because of the sizing (although I reduced these ads slightly to fit the space, 94%).

I don't like to mess with borders in these skinny ads because I need all the room I can get! I use contrast to my advantage—to call attention to the space and to confine the information. A condensed typeface is also pretty much a given and I like to make the info as large as I can. By the way, the "snow plowing" ad is very appropriate for my part of the country!

I try to avoid thin and decorative typefaces as they can become too "anemic" for the small space. All the ads shown on this page share the same attributes—they need to be bold! Small space doesn't mean you have to shy away from a pattern either. The blood donor ad shows that patterns can work well in a small space.

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Bring donor card or a picture ID.

## Sometimes the ad is flexible

In the "vote" ad, the pattern has another advantage—it can be stretched or shortened depending on the space available.

This ad can be used in a horizontal format as well.

Using symbols, like the stars and stripes, evoke a feeling of patriotism to allow us to display the message in an eye-catching, graphic manner.

And, since this year will have lots of political ads, you may want to put this one in a library!



## Elements

Line, space, shape, texture, size, value and color are the elements of design that we use over and over. How to use these elements is the function of the principles of design—balance, emphasis, unity, and proximity to help to keep that information organized so that the reader has a clear understanding of the message.

These elements and principles come together, in varying degrees, in all of these ads. The majority of text is bold and solid while bursts and artwork are used to highlight specific areas.

I also tend to use more grey and reverse areas because these ads compete with larger ads that contain more white space. Plus the text choice of bold and sans-serif typefaces can work well with the screened areas in the ad.

However, balance in contrast is still an important factor in the overall look of the ad. You will notice that I chose not to just make the entire ad black but chose to break up areas to highlight specific info.

## Add some punch to the ad

Don't be afraid to go bold and add pattern to the small space ad. Keep everything in balance and you will be fine. In the meantime, try your own ideas...

## Sometimes the ad is wide

Headers can be quite a problem. We want to unite all the advertisers, but we usually don't have much room. The header below (yes, I realize it's more of a "footer," but pretend it's at the top) offers a bit of flexibility as well.

For example, the original width is 61 picas (slightly more than ten inches; again reduced to fit the page) but this arrangement allows for the width to change if you need to fill just half the page. The reader still knows the ads are grouped and what they are about. This header is slightly less than an inch tall, yet it acts as a unifying element without feeling too confined.

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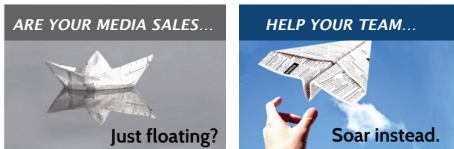
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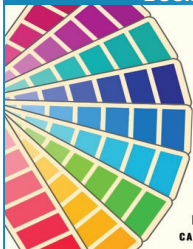


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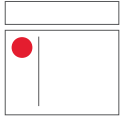
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**I**t might just be a good time to consider selling your weekly newspaper or major daily. The financial climate is soon going to change according to Jerome Powell, the head of the Federal Reserve. Interest rates on a 30-year fixed mortgage are presently at 7.30% as we are in the first quarter of 2024 and on a 15-year fixed mortgage you can expect to pay 6.44%. CD rates, for now, are high at 5.50% with a 13-month deposit. The best CD rates currently available are at 5.75% according to WalletHub, the popular personal finance site. Personal loan rates are another story with APR figures between 6.40% and 35.99%. In March, when the Feds meet again, look for a cut across the board in interest rates – and as the year marches forward – look for more cuts. CD rates are expected to drop into the 4.5% range on average. Then we have the angst of a presidential election in November and all the attention and overall awareness of the economy that experience brings us.

There is no question that the timing of selling your print & digital business is both an art and a science. Planning for a secure future is vital and being smart about doing so matters. Timing a sale of a media entity you have worked to build and develop over decades is consequential and takes thought and consideration from several fronts. The economy, the market, your personal health and financial situation, and the overall current condition of the business you operate should all come into focus.

Are you showing a profit? Are sales going in the wrong direction? Is competition stronger than ever before? Is it becoming more difficult to hire and train qualified staff to fill key positions? Can you develop a compelling reason as to why you should contemplate selling? Must you sell? Has a competitor approached you about acquiring your business? Are you nearing retirement age and seeking to relax and enjoy the balance of your years? Does the thought of travel beckon? Do you want to spend more time visiting with your grandchildren? I recommend that you initially have your publishing portfolio financially valued by an expert in the media trade. Determine what the business is currently worth and if the appraisal is done properly it will have recommendations in the report and explain what steps specifically should be taken to enhance the entity and help to condition it for a potential sale. Every valuation report should have a standardization grading analysis included, something I created about 30 years back. At my firm, Kamen & Co Group Services, LLC in New York, we provide an independent analysis of what red flags might be glaring at your publishing company and make suggestions of how best to confront them. Are you paying too much for print or distribution? Does your publication lack certain elements both digitally and in print that weaken its overall appeal and attractiveness? What does your Google Analytics look like to a potential buyer? We

closely analyze a large array of issues to help bring your attention to them.

Deciding on selling is emotional for many. After all, the portfolio or media entity you operate has been your baby for a long while, and letting go of it is nothing to sneeze at. It deserves your full attention and thought. Acquiring a relevant valuation could potentially help you to come to terms with selling. Not knowing the value of your business before listing is silly and you owe it to yourself – and your family to do the right thing. So reach out, call me directly, and let us speak confidentially. I will explain the process and answer your questions. Then you can decide what is best for you – and when to move forward. ■

*Kevin Kamen is proud to be the expert media financial valuation resource for the Forbes 400 list of America's richest people for ten straight years. Having successfully assisted Forbes Magazine's editorial team of wealth reporters for the past decade through financially valuing and calculating the worth of specific billionaires for the FORBES 400 Richest Americans List published each October, the Forbes editorial team has again reached out to Kevin Kamen to assist with financially valuing the Richest Families of America for their soon to be published FORBES RICHEST AMERICAN FAMILIES LIST. Kevin is the President/CEO of Kamen & Co. Group Services, LLC. Media Appraisers, Accountants & Brokers [www.kamengroup.com](http://www.kamengroup.com)*



**KEEPING THE FREE COMMUNITY PUBLISHING INDUSTRY INFORMED - ONE ISSUE AT A TIME!**  
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# Publish

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## NORFOLK KEYNOTE ANNOUNCED!

### THRIVE: Turning Uncertainty To Your Competitive Advantage

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