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The Independent Publisher

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April 2015



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"...it can be independence forever for those who value it sufficiently... if they give their allegiance to an association such as this one, they will be dedicated to keeping the spirit alive, and they will be doing it by helping each other."

— Victor R. Jose

IFPA Founding Conference
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The Wrecking Crew

This doesn't fit the mold of most Presidential Columns, but in the end, it's an entrepreneurial story with a link to our industry.

Seven years ago, Marc Maron's podcast featured film maker Denny Tedesco telling stories that slightly rang a bell. The more I heard the more I was hooked. Tedesco's father Tommy was an LA session guitarist, during the late fifties, sixties and early seventies, part of a group of musicians that Elvis Costello describes as "the unsung stars of so many records that you carry in your heart."

It was an informally organized group of free-lancers who anonymously created a significant portion of the music you and I remember from that era. They were

the most desirable "first call" musicians, top guns for hire at virtually every studio in Los Angeles. For instance, drummer Hal Blaine is credited with playing on over forty US#1 Hits, more than 150 Top Ten Records and eight Grammy Records of the year. Did you ever hear his name before this?

To give you an idea they played legendary sessions for Sinatra, Nat King Cole, the Byrds, the Beach Boys and Frank Zappa. Talk about range. Hundreds of commercials and TV themes that were the sound track of your youth.

One example, if you've ever been to a high school pep rally, you know the infectious "clap clap clap-clap-clap clap-clap-clap-clap Let's Go!" chant. Right? If you're a

by
Bob
Munn



But listen closely, and you'll find a lesson in the ebb and flow of forces in the marketplace that is a cautionary tale for all of us.

trivia expert, you know the single was released by a band called the Routers, who one would assume were One Hit Wonders who hit that combination while jamming in a garage someplace. In fact, the Routers were Wrecking Crew session musicians that included the aforementioned Mr. Blaine, Michael Tedesco's father, Tommy on guitar and a crewcut keyboard player named Leon Russell. (You either get that irony or you don't).

Denny Tedesco was a kid whose father took him to work the

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Larry Grimes, President

day they cut the theme song for Green Acres. One imagines he would have preferred a different day when they created the Hawaii Five-O theme or worked on the Beach Boys Good Vibrations or California Girls. But he knew there were stories to tell and invested EIGHTEEN YEARS mining the heritage of the remaining living Wrecking Crew members, including his father in the last year of his life. He dug up film and tape, chased leads and maxed out credit cards and every other financial resource to tell this story.

At the point of that podcast, Tedesco was ten years into it. The film was completed and cut. But no one had seen it. His wife accused him of making the most expensive home movie in history. What was the hold up? This documentary contains over 100 songs, and the licensing agencies

demanded to be paid.

Eventually, a Kickstarter campaign generated an additional \$300,000 to help him secure the rights, and last week the documentary, The Wrecking Crew opened to a limited theatrical release as well as OnDemand and in the iTunes Store.

It was absolutely the best \$7.00 I've spent this year. Not only did I finally get to see the complete and incredibly amazing full story, as well as recall special moments around most of those 100 songs, but I got to see the product of an indomitable entrepreneurial spirit. An eighteen year vision quest.

The name Wrecking Crew reflected the fact that their generation of young, innovative musicians upset the world order of formality and classical training that preceded it. The old guard saw their

fearless informality and accused them of wrecking the music business. Instead, Tedesco, Blain and company laid the groundwork for the greatest decade in the history of popular music.

Interestingly enough, at about that same time in the late fifties and through the sixties another Wrecking Crew was disrupting the community publishing industry. There are many parallels between the impact of those innovative studio musicians and the roots of our industry.

The film is worth seeing just for the story and the music. But listen closely, and you'll find a lesson in the ebb and flow of forces in the marketplace that is a cautionary tale for all of us.

Go to iTunes, OnDemand or what have you. See the Wrecking Crew. You'll thank me on multiple levels.

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The Apple Watch Can Spark Our Industry

by
Douglas
Fry



If you know me at all you know that I love technology gadgets. I stood in line, in the rain, for the first iPhone. I've been using technology since punch cards. That dates me I know but even though I'm old as dirt I enjoy using the latest and greatest stuff.

So, when the Apple Watch was rumored, then announced, then re-introduced, and when it finally actually goes on sale I might be one of the first in line to pick one up and strap it to my wrist. Why?

I see a great deal of potential for our industry in that little Dick Tracy wristwatch. But before I take the wraps off that idea, let me show you why I think there is even merit in the advanced technology. Let's go down memory lane so that we can all start from the same point of reference.

FIRST CELL PHONE

Do you remember your first cell phone? I remember mine. It was about the size of a shoe box, it weighed close to a small child, and could be connected to your car so that making calls from the mobile office (a.k.a. your car) was possible. There were incremental improvements to the cell phone along the way. The Motorola StarTak was amazing. It had two lines of text so you could see the name *and* number of the person calling. It flipped open just like a "tricorder" from Star Trek. Way cool.

NEXT, THE IPHONE

Then along came the iPhone. It was so easy to use, so slim, so powerful, so different, that I went out of my way to use it. I pulled it out just so

You might have noticed that with each advance in technology there is a desire to use it, show it off, share your new-found coolness with others.

that people would see me using it. But more importantly you, could sort of use it to connect to the internet. Sure it was slow, and you got to pay lots of money to access that slowness. Still it was pretty slick.

APPLE PAY

With the latest iPhones one can pay for things by simply holding the phone near a terminal and touching the fingerprint sensor on the phone. The first time I tried it I was blown away. No more fumbling around for my wallet, then pulling out a debit card, swiping the card, entering my

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PIN, and sometimes signing on the terminal with that pen every flu-ridden person had touched before me. Instead I simply pulled out my phone, placed my thumb on the sensor and held it near the terminal. All done in about 3 seconds with one hand.

I fell in love instantly. In fact, just like the original iPhone, I went out of my way to use the new technology. If a retailer doesn't use NFC (Near Field Communication) technology I find their competition that does. I'm not proud to admit that I have actually ordered Hot Chocolate from McDonalds just because they accept Apple Pay.

NOW THE APPLE WATCH

Soon there will be the Apple Watch. You strap it on your wrist and eliminate the need to reach into your pocket to access all the magic. You can read your emails, answer phone calls, see your texts, use Apple Pay, track your workouts - how often you

are standing up from the desk, even send your heartbeat to other Apple Watch users. (OK, honestly I don't really get that one either.)

But how could that help our industry? You might have noticed that with each advance in technology there is a desire to use it, show it off, share your new-found coolness with others. The same thing will happen with the Apple Watch, and others brands when they offer the same functionality.

HOW WILL THAT HELP US?

With this new technology imagine developing an app that ties to your website which automatically sends a "tickle" to a watch wearer when something they are interested in becomes available. Or a text that sends a short message telling them your latest edition is ready to download or pick up. This tech could be the gateway to younger readers. The coolness factor would attract more

readers and users. You could become "the" source of information not only in print but in the online community as well.

Imagine your logo popping up on millions of wrists that will wear this technology. You can already do most of this without the watch. But with the watch involved others will see what is happening, instead of it being buried in your pocket or purse, and they can become involved in the process. "What's that?" "It's a notification from the Paper that the Mustang I've been looking for is available." "That's pretty cool. How did you do that?"

We discuss this revolving around Apple environment but it will come to every phone and wrist, no matter what brand. You have the opportunity and challenge to figure out how you can make it work for your publications. I look forward to this helping us all. I'll even send you my heartbeat when it happens.

BACK TO BASICS!

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SEPTEMBER 24 - 26, 2015

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

HYATT REGENCY RIVERWALK



Graphic Hooks

by
Ellen
Hanrahan



Been shopping... at my favorite Canadian online dealer — Mighty Deals! However, this time I bought some vector art (OK, I did buy some more fonts, but I swear, I'm done for a while). **NOTE:** There is an international transaction fee (about 3%) when you shop here, so use a credit card that has no international transaction fees as part of its perks.

I purchased a Spring Summer Graphics Bundle (200 vector files of all sorts) for \$24. Unfortunately, by the time you read this it will be over... although on a number of occasions they will extend the offer or repeat it at a later date. More on the collection below.

In the next column I placed a simple flower file included (It's at 30% of its original size) and I am going to disassemble some of the art to show how this art can be used for small or simple promos in your papers.

One-Column Promotions

It's been a while since I had any one-column ads, but promotions or information for upcoming dates are perfect for this ad size. Most of the time you can get by with just a few words since these are basically "teaser" ads to alert your readers to future events. They are also effective as organizing tools for groupings of similar types of ads.



SOMETIMES YOU
DON'T NEED ART-
WORK—JUST A
DISTINCTIVE TYPE-
FACE TO LET PEOPLE
KNOW ABOUT AN
UPCOMING EVENT:
**TAX DAY IS
APRIL 15TH
\$\$\$\$\$**

The Collection

These high quality vector designs—from Saint Patrick's Day to back to school in August.—include typographical elements, animal characters, love-themed typographic designs, and save the date templates. There are Mother's Day and Father's Day designs, lots of Saint Patrick's Day and Easter designs, green-themed banners, food-themed designs, abstract backgrounds, typographic summer posters, summer-themed icon collections, travel greeting designs... and I will attempt to incorporate them into my samples for the next couple of months.

By the way, the **Summer Style** art was placed "as is"!



Two-Column Promotions

The depth of our headers usually runs around an inch, and that isn't a whole lot of space. They can also be anywhere from two-column inches to five- or six-column inches, so the more flexible we can make the heading, the easier it is for the pagination process. In the examples below, we have a 2x1 ad, but could easily stretch to multiple columns by putting the text on one line.



Final Thoughts...

The **Summer Style** and **camera** art above, were from other parts of the collection. There are also some "characters" that could be used to develop a campaign—especially back to school. (Sigh...) I'll try to get ideas and see what I can come up with. Until then, I leave you with **Zelda**...

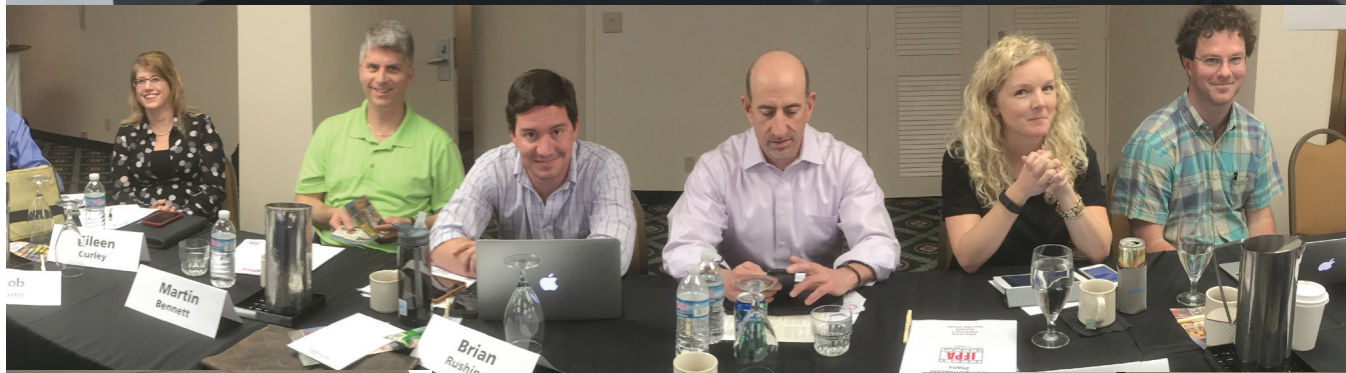
*This beautiful script is clean, romantic and easy
to read with a lot of gorgeous ligatures
Until next month...*

Ellen Hanrahan hanrahan.in@att.net ©2015



by
Douglas
Fry

2015 Publishers Summit

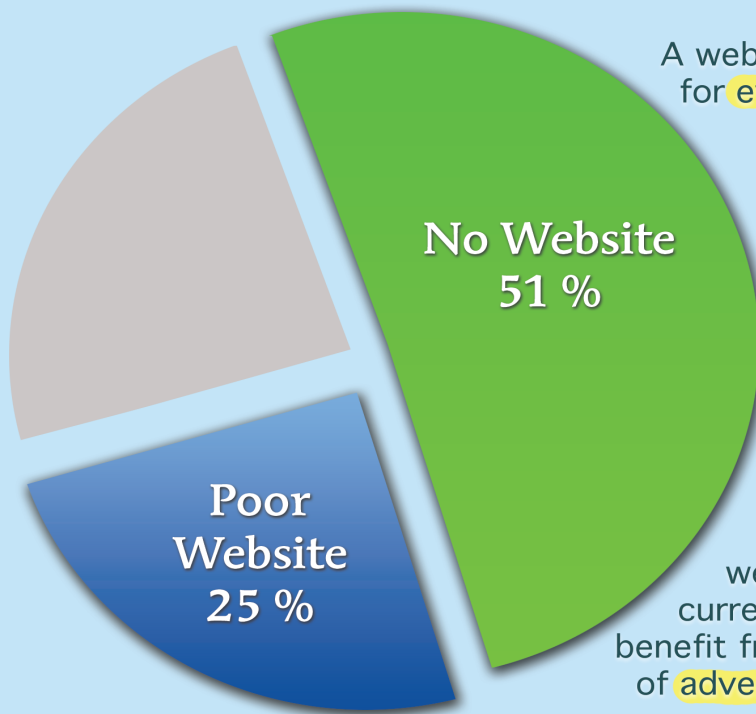


The 2015 Publishers' Summit, held in sunny Fort Lauderdale, was a huge success. As you can see by all the smiling faces there were dozens of great ideas that will improve the bottom line for all these publishers.

Don't let this chance slip by you next year. The Publishers' Summit gives you time to discuss your challenges and hear how others have overcome them and how they profited from the opportunity. Plus, you get to meet with some of the greatest minds in our industry. That's a priceless commodity.



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Editing Is What Editors Are Supposed To Do

by Laura Mallory

Although a case from a federal court in Richmond, Virginia was filed by someone representing herself, the court's decision confirms the basic proposition that the media gets to decide what they will and will not publish.

This matter arose out of a complaint filed against eleven newspaper companies, in which a woman alleged these newspapers violated her constitutional and civil rights. The plaintiff asserted that the Department of Veterans' Affairs, various judges and other government officials mistreated her and she was not safe, as the attorneys for the Department of Veterans' Affairs can inflict injury, harm, atrocity or any act of terrorism on her. The complaint was filed against the newspapers for failing to report on the woman's legal proceedings against the federal government concerning these alleged wrongs. Further, the complaint asserted the newspapers have previously published articles concerning lawsuits filed by white citizens against the federal government, but the newspapers did not publish any articles about the woman's legal proceedings as she is African-American. She alleged this constitutes racial discrimination. She requested the court to order all of the newspapers to publish articles concerning the cases she filed against the federal government and requested that some of the newspapers pay damages for failing to report her legal proceedings.

The newspapers fielded multiple motions to dismiss. With respect to the request that the newspapers

publish articles about the woman's legal battles, one of the newspapers argued that the conduct she alleged lies at the heart of editorial discretion, which is protected by the First Amendment and which leaves private citizens the power to determine whether or not to speak on a particular subject. Other newspapers made similar arguments, including that the First Amendment does not permit someone to commandeer a newspaper's editorial decision making. Rather, limitations as to size and content of a newspaper and the treatment of public issues are under the exercise of the editorial control and judgment.

Collectively, the newspapers all asserted that the complaint failed to plead any facts showing that the newspapers engaged in intentional, purposeful racial discrimination and the newspapers' conduct did not interfere with a legitimate contract right. The newspapers argued that in light of their respective First Amendment free speech right, it is clear that neither white nor non-white citizens have a right to have specific articles or material published by a newspaper.

The court agreed with the newspapers. With respect to the discrimination claim, the woman was required to prove that the discrimination was purposeful. The statute cited in her complaint protects the equal right of all persons in the United States to make and enforce contracts without respect to race. Therefore, in order to succeed on her claim, she had to establish the newspapers not only intended to discriminate, but the discrimination also interfered with

from
King & Ballow



The complaint was filed against the newspapers for failing to report on the woman's legal proceedings against the federal government concerning these alleged wrongs.

a contractual interest of a legitimate property right.

The woman also failed to plead any facts that any of the newspaper defendants intentionally or purposefully discriminated against her based on her race. Rather, she simply asserted in her complaint the newspapers previously published articles about cases filed by white citizens but did not publish a single article concerning her case. However, she failed to assert that this editorial decision not to publish articles about her legal battles was motivated by discrimination. Secondly, she failed to allege facts showing that any of the newspapers deprived her of any contractual or property right.

CONCLUSION

The First Amendment provides a newspaper the right to decide whether to speak on a particular subject. Pursuant to the long established First Amendment jurisprudence protecting the free press, claims against the newspapers for failing to publish articles failed.

Reprinted from "Comment," a publication of the law firm of King & Ballow, Nashville, TN. Mark Hunt is our consultant with King & Ballow and he can be reached at (615) 726-5497 or mhunt@kingballow.com. The foregoing column is explanatory in nature and is not intended to provide legal advice as to particular situations.



from the
**Huffington
Post Canada**

Clean Up Your Desk

You probably missed it but that resolution you made to be more organized and that desk you cleaned up before the holidays is already an absolute pigsty. That's probably why Jan. 13 has been designated National Clean Your Desk Day, providing an excuse — nay, an opportunity — to get yourself cleaned up and ready to face at least this work week.

Messy desks are often associated with disorganization, thereby giving others around you the impression that you may not have your work (or life) under control. But recently, there's been some debate as to the benefits of clutter. One study in the U.S. found that those who worked in mess were more inclined toward originality and creative thinking, the New York Times reported.

So does that mean you're off the hook when it comes to tidying up? Definitely not, according to that same study. A clean desk helps with following the rules, being generous and eating healthfully, according to the Association for Psychological Science. So unless your job — at work or at home — requires only creative brilliance and no rule-following at all, it's best to get things under control.

Check out these expert tips on how to get your desk organized easily — and make sure it at least somewhat stays that way:

CREATE A CLEAR SPACE

While many of us work on our computers, it's important to have one space free of clutter on the desk for other kinds of work, notes Technorati. Make it a priority to keep this area clean.

PUT AWAY THE SUPPLIES

Are you really using that stapler every hour? How about that pencil sharpener? If it's not a supply you're using constantly, put it in a conve-

nient desk drawer. Lifehacker suggests using the "breadbox" rule, i.e. if it's smaller than a breadbox, put it away.

GET ON TOP OF THE PAPER

It is so easy to allow for piles like this to build up on your desk. Monica Friel, president of the organizing service Chaos To Order, suggests opening mail near a garbage can, recycling bin or shredder and tossing it as soon as possible.

KEEP CLEANING SUPPLIES AROUND

You know how after you clean your house, you're always a little more careful with the sink splashes and sweeping for a few days after? Just think, if you kept a dust cleaning spray and screen wipe nearby, you'd feel the same way about your desk.

STOP THE CORD MADNESS

Whether it's for your lamps, computer or cellphone charger, it's easier to let cords overrun your workspace and make you feel disorganized in the process. There are a ton of gadgets out there to keep you organized, but even a simple twist tie can make a difference.

STOP EATING AT YOUR DESK

You know what creates mess? Wrappers from sandwiches, crumbs from cookies and various other food-associated items. Stop eating at your desk, and you'll find the mess lessens — and hey, it's a good idea to take a break anyway.

AND WHILE YOU'RE AT IT, STOP DRINKING SO MUCH

It's incredibly easy to let mugs pile up on your desk, but that's exactly how water gets spilled all over your

notes for an upcoming meeting, notes Technorati. And of course, it's also how you end up with 14 cups on your desk at the end of the week.

YOU NEED TWO PENS

Seriously, why do you still have a pencil holder full of highlighters, Sharpies and pencils (when was the last time you used a pencil?!?)? You probably only need two pens on your desk, so get ruthless and toss the rest.

VIEW YOUR DESK AS A TASK MANAGER

This is a larger chore to be sure, but if you can prioritize your workspace according to what you use most and least, that goes a long way toward staying neat. Think about your daily tasks and how your desk reflects those. Do you really need all those books lined up?

TAKE POST-ITS DIGITAL

Post-Its can be a useful tool for reminding you of tasks, but they also create a ridiculous-looking mess that can impact you more than you realize. Get in the habit of making to-do lists on your phone for more streamlined, neater organization.

KEEP THE PERSONAL TO A MINIMUM

It's nice to be able to look at your family while at work, but it's easy to let the personal items and knick-knacks build up quickly. Stick to just one picture frame — and that's it.

DO IT DAILY – OK, FINE, WEEKLY

Carve out time in your schedule at the end of the day (or the end of the week, if daily feels like too much) to clean up your desk with these tips. Remember it can help you start the next day feeling more organized and less stressed, so you're really just doing yourself a favor.

10 Ways to Ignite Performance

by
Dan
McCarthy



In today's rapidly changing and competitive world, maintaining the same level of performance is not an option. As the bar continues to rise, performance needs to keep improving or today's acceptable performance can become tomorrow's poor performance.

Here are ten ways for a manager to help an employee improve their performance. Some are easy and don't cost a dime – others will require more investment of time and resources. The thing they all have in common is that they all will give you a substantial return on your investment.

1. REVIEW AND CLARIFY EXPECTATIONS

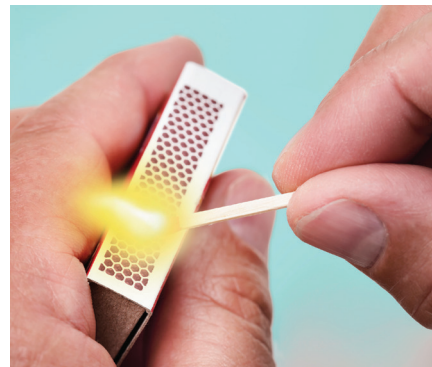
A consultant was hired by a CEO to "fix" one of his managers who was about to be fired. The consultant asked the CEO to write down all of his expectations for this manager. When he met with the manager, the consultant gave him the list. A few

months later, after the manager's performance had dramatically improved, the CEO was congratulating the consultant for his brilliant work. "How did you do it?" he asked. "I gave him your list," said the consultant. The CEO slammed his fist on the table and said, "I knew it – you cheated!"

Try giving each of your employees "the secret list." It's even better if you both create your own lists, then get together to compare. Watch amazing things happen.

2. AGREE ON GOALS AND MEASURES

While clarifying expectations is a great way to improve performance, agreeing on specific goals and measures is even more powerful. If something isn't measured, it's harder to give people feedback about it, and therefore, they can't improve. Measurement also sends a message that something is important, and if no one



is tracking it, it sends the message that no one really cares.

3. DISCUSS DEVELOPMENT NEEDS AND CREATE AN INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Once the plan is created, don't let it sit and gather dust. Review and update it on a regular basis. See number two – what gets measured gets done.

4. PROVIDE ONGOING, PROACTIVE FEEDBACK

We can't get better if we don't know
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— Ted Nessi, WPRI 12, Providence, Rhode Island, July 23, 2014

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by
F. John Reh

The War On Your Desk

Every day more and more information is thrown at you. New mail, reports from various committees, invoices, proposals, and more all hit your desk several times a day. You are too busy to deal with it right away so it just begins to pile up. Your desktop begins to look like a war zone.

The problem here is not that your desk is messy. The problem is that important stuff gets lost. It either gets buried by new material coming in, or it is in the new material, but is not noticed. As a result, you spend too much time on things that are simply urgent rather than those that are important.

When your boss wants to know how soon she can have that report for the Vice President, you don't want to tell her you didn't notice the memo she sent you requesting the report. Nor will your boss be thrilled to hear that the layout for the new product line is late because you set it aside and it got covered up and you forgot about it.

Some people will tell you the best way to solve this problem is a clean desk. Others say messy is okay.



Who's right? Neither. And both.

CLUTTERED DESK, CLUTTERED MIND

Not too long ago, there was a popular expression 'a cluttered desk is a sign of a cluttered mind.' That expression gave rise to an entire industry designed to help business executives clean their desktops as a sign of their mental acuity.

No doubt you have seen movies where the boss sits in his office atop a downtown skyscraper. He sits behind a glass-top desk with no drawers. The only adornments are the impressive pen set for signing important documents and a telephone or intercom so he can give orders.

ON THE OTHER HAND

Many people see nothing wrong with piles of paper covering the desktop, even spilling on to the chair seats and office floor. They quote adages like 'a cluttered desk is a sign of genius' and 'a messy desk is only a sign of a messy desk.'

We all know someone whose desk is that way. You don't see how they can even tell if the desktop is metal or wood. Yet, when you ask them for something, they go right to a pile, leaf through 2 or 3 sheets, and pull out what you asked for.

WHAT WORKS FOR YOU

Both sides are correct. The issue is

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by
**Jo-Ann
Johnson**

In recent years, the challenges facing North American publishers have been discussed ad nauseam. And while those ordeals continue to put publications to the test, the news from the community journalism sector tells a very different story. And it is this story that John Schaffner, publisher of The Beacon of Port Clinton, Ohio, is determined to disseminate.

Since early 2014, Schaffner has been working with his staff to spread the word among both readers and advertisers that community publications are not only alive, but also thriving. He even had buttons made for his advertising sales reps which read, "Ask Me About PIND," which stands for "Print Is Not Dead."

"There is a duality to the presumed decline of print because of the fact that dailies and paid-circulation publications have been hurt badly in recent years while free publications like ours are doing well," he reports. "So we've come up with a way to express the reality for publications like ours whose audit figures show that we've been able to hold on to our readership."

As part of the PIND campaign, The Beacon's advertising sales reps have received training focusing on how to share this information with customers and prospective customers.

Says Schaffner, "We've encouraged our reps to talk to people about our success, which is also an opening to do a demo of our audit figures and show why The Beacon is still the most effective advertising medium in our marketplace. And because we are a free weekly, we put all news on our Web site — even before it comes out in print — without having to worry that we're giving away our product for free."

The newspaper also features regular PIND promotional ads with testimonials from established local businesses and has begun implementing efforts to regain the classified and real estate revenue that has been lost due to the Internet. For example, after seeing a similar move at another

Ohio newspaper, Schaffner moved all of The Beacon's "Help Wanted" ads to page two.

"Since the shift, we've seen a big bump in employment advertising and feel we're doing the community an important service by featuring businesses that are hiring," he notes. "In addition, we're starting to gather e-mail addresses so that we can begin sending out breaking news alerts and have been looking at novel ways to reach prospective home buyers."

The bottom line, says Schaffner, is that community publications owe it to their readers, their advertisers, and themselves to spread the word about the strength of print community journalism.

"The message — and it's an important message — is that there is a lot of good news out there for community publications," he adds.

This article was written by Jo-Ann Johnson of Metro Creative Graphics, Inc.

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10 Ways

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how we're doing. It's especially important when we have behavioral "blind spots", and no one cared enough to point them out.

5. PROVIDE ONGOING COACHING

Coaching isn't just for new employees – everyone can benefit from coaching, and managers can learn to be better coaches.

6. PROVIDE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Once upon a time there was a woodcutter who was very busy cutting a tree with an axe. He seemed very tired and exhausted, the tree was big, but he was a great worker and did not waste a minute of his time focused on cutting the tree. Another wise woodcutter passed by and noticed the woodcutter at his work.

He said "Hello there, good morning. I see that you are working hard at your job, why don't you take a break for a while, and sharpen your axe?" To which the wood cutter said "I don't have time," and continued to work harder at cutting the tree.

Make sure you allow and encourage your employees to sharpen their tools.

7. PROVIDE RECOGNITION AND REWARD

Everyone wants – and deserves – a little praise now and then. Try asking everyone on your team to write down what kind of recognition and reward means the most to them, then tailor your approach to each individual. There are over 1,000 ways to do it, and almost as many excuses for not doing it.

8. DELEGATE AND EMPOWER

Most people thrive when faced with a new challenge. However, make sure it's true delegation, not dumping some mundane task you don't want to do.

9. ASK "WHAT DO YOU THINK?"

It's more of a short-term shot in the arm, but it's energizing when your manager asks for your opinion on some high-level issue or decision.

10. PROVIDE A MENTOR OR COACH

A mentor or coach can provide a fresh perspective and help someone get over that hurdle that's holding them back.



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The War On Your Desk

not which is correct. The issue is which will make you more effective. There are a few fundamental guidelines that apply to both approaches, but the key is to work in a manner that allows you to be most effective. Almost everyone needs to get rid of some of the clutter atop their desk, but having no more than a single item on your desk at any one time won't work for many of us.

Many people are working on several projects at the same time (or almost the same time). Creative types feel the need to have inspiration surrounding them. Detail-oriented individuals need volumes of reference material close at hand. Some people feel the piles of work make them look busy and, thus, keep them safer in times of layoffs. Others feel a clean desk shows how efficient they are at getting the work done. What is important is to do what works for you.

HOW TO TAME THE MONSTER

Whether you are going for the sterile glass desktop, or simply want to bring a little more order to the chaos of your desktop, there are a few fundamental guidelines:

REALLY WANT TO IMPROVE.

I don't recommend the really severe approach that some do. Unfortunately that leaves excuses to be too easy on yourself. This attempt to make your desk less cluttered and more efficient depends on you making a serious effort.

KEEP, TOSS, OR MOVE.

Find three containers. Label the smallest "keep". Label the largest "toss". Have another container labeled "move". The really vital stuff will go into your keep container to be sorted later. Anything that you want

to take home or give away goes into the move container. Everything else goes into the toss container. (Ideally your toss container will be two parts. One part will be trash to be disposed of. The other will be paper products, which can be recycled.)

START WITH THE OLDEST.

You can tell by looking at them which pile is the oldest. Usually it is farthest from your chair. It will be the easiest to throw away items from this pile.

EVALUATE EACH PIECE ONLY ONCE

Look at each item in the pile. Decide which container it will go into. You can't set it back on your desk for later, you have to decide now. Put everything into one of the three containers. There is no other option.

ASK YOURSELF THIS...

The first question is "do I have this somewhere else, or can I get it from someone?" If you have a copy in email, or in a report, or on the desk of the person who prepared the market analysis, etc., you don't need to keep a copy. Toss it. Then ask "why do I need this?" If the answer is a) to take action on it, b) to do something

with it when I get more information from someone, or c) to refer to as I do other work, put it into the keep pile. (After you get rid of the clutter you will re-sort your keep pile by those three categories, so feel free to separate them now. It will save time later.) If your answer was anything else, toss that item.

BE RUTHLESS. BE BRAVE.

As you progress through each pile, getting closer and close to the things that just arrived, be ruthless in your decisions. Take no prisoners. If you really don't need it, toss it. And be brave. Don't hang on to something just because someone might ask you something about it someday. Don't build a fortress of paper to protect yourself.

MANAGE THIS ISSUE

Your desktop doesn't have to be sterile and completely devoid of paper, although it can be if that helps. Your goal is to organize your desktop so that it maximizes your efficiency. If that means a few more piles on your desk than the person next door, that is okay - provided everything you kept helps you meet your goal of increased efficiency.





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