

*May* **2024**  
**INFORMER**



**Community  
Papers of  
Michigan**



# Spring Has Sprung

## And Hopefully Your Sales Are Flowering

From The Executive Director, Don Rush



**The other day while sitting, waiting for my turn to get my hair cut, I started thinking: Barbershops. Man, running an old school, old fashioned barbershop business must be a tough gig.**

There are lots of barbershops out there – competition is fierce. There are big chain barbershops, fancy barbershops and even women’s hair salons all vying to cut men’s hair. How do small community barbershops set themselves apart from the competition?

I suppose the first way is to deliver on their service. Good haircuts can keep a customer coming back for years and paying for the service. A customer may come back after a bad haircut experience; however, chances are they won’t.

A barbershop can also set itself apart by having a clean shop, easy to understand pricing, comfortable chairs and by supporting the community.

Maybe more importantly, barbers must be knowledgeable about their trade, they need to keep up on local scuttlebutt and be likeable.

As I was sitting there, waiting my turn, it came to me: Running a barbershop is sort of like running a community paper! Community papers face all sorts of competition for advertising dollars and it’s a tough gig. How do successful community papers set themselves apart from their competitors, be they other print mediums, broadcast or digital?

First, we deliver on our service. If we say our publication will go to “X” number of homes, we need to make sure we deliver to those “X” number of homes. We design not only eye-catching, effective advertisements, we also help our customers create their marketing plans.

We successfully keep a neat looking office, provide easy to understand pricing. We support worthwhile community endeavors and groups and our representatives out on the streets are

friendly, know their trade, publication’s history and strengths. These representatives also keep up on all the local scuttlebutt (though refrain from gossip).

Barbershops are important community businesses just as community papers are important community businesses. By the way, are you making sure the barbershops in your community are getting a copy of your publication? I could have used a paper to read while I was waiting for my cut, but then again, I guess I wouldn’t have come up with this “earth-shattering” comparison.

### Current events

At the end of April, a member publisher called me and shared that his office had received a large number of calls from readers voicing their concerns on the publisher’s coverage of recent university protests. Specifically, he said his community paper didn’t cover any of the protests with news because there were no protests in his community.

He asked if other publishers have had similar calls for news of the protests and if so, how did they handle the calls or coverage.

Please email me with your experiences and I will share them.

### Special section ideas needed

Now that spring is here and with a fresh haircut, I wanted to head to Holland for the annual Tulip Time Festival. Did you know, each June the Tulip Time organizers order their tulip bulbs from the Netherlands. The bulbs arrive and are planted each October. They plant over 500,000 bulbs each year! That’s a lot of bulbs.

One of the groovy aspects of community papering is covering local festivals, fairs and fun events. One of the groovy aspects of being a member of Community Papers of Michigan

is sharing ideas. How do you promote and cover your community events? Do you publish special sections or feature pages? Do you offer “special” pricing? What do you do?

Please share your success stories in the world of special event sections/pages. Please share how you plan and bring those plans to life. You can email me, DonRush@CPapersMi.com or use the United States Postal Service by mailing to 10120 Hegel Road, Goodrich, MI 48438.

**I will share with members in later issues of the Informer.**



### MegaMarket

Lastly, I want to thank all those who are running CPM’s weekly classified network, MegaMarket. The program keeps CPM afloat and the more member publications who publish the better. Members who run these also get a little bonus check at year’s end as a thank you.

If you want to know more about the MegaMarket program email DanaRisner@CPapersMi.com

**Here’s to you all having a successful May!**

**Got a question, drop me a line at DonRush@CPapersMi.com and I will try to find an answer.**



# Ad - Libs

BY JOHN FOUST



## Put a Stop to Workplace Silos

Jim, who used to work with a local volunteer fire department, told me about the technique they used to keep everyone on the right roads to arrive at fire sites. “It was in the days before GPS,” he said. “We were in an area with a lot of rural roads – and since we were driving to the fire from different directions – we couldn’t afford for someone to miss a turn. Lives were in the balance, and time was crucial.”

He explained that the lead vehicle – the firetruck – had bags of lime on the front seat. Lime is the powder that is used to mark baselines on baseball fields. Rain washes it away eventually, so there is no long-lasting image. Every time the truck made a turn, someone threw a bag of lime onto the pavement (or the gravel) at the intersection. The bag burst open and made a large, unmistakable mark on the road. The lime left an easy path to follow for the

entire firefighting team.

“The system got us to fires as quickly as possible,” Jim said. “Night or day, there were clear signs at each turn. Without the lime, there’s no telling how many houses and barns – and most important, lives – would have been lost. One way to say it is that we were all on the same page.”

In business as well as in life-saving situations, it’s imperative to be informed. Like Francis Bacon so succinctly wrote: “Knowledge is power.”

I recently talked with Abby, who said her entire media company is siloed. “That has filtered down to our ad department. No one knows much about what anyone else is doing. “It’s frustrating,” she said, “We could provide a lot of help to each other, but management has the philosophy that

we should think about our own accounts and nothing else. When a new advertiser comes on board, sometimes we don’t know about it until their ads start running.”

Abby has a simple suggestion that might be of help: “Talk and listen. Every now and then, some managers like to organize team-building activities, but honestly, I think structured team exercises are a waste of time. The biggest thing that will build teamwork is to know what’s going on around us. Our work is impacted by the people in our department, along with the work they are doing. Real teams work in an informed and supportive environment.”

Abby’s story represents an extreme example, but I’ll bet there are companies in your hometown that have silos. It’s difficult to work *for* a company like that, and it’s difficult to work *with* a client like that.

Patrick Lencioni, in his excellent book *Silos, Politics and Turf Wars*, writes: “Silos – and the turf wars they enable – devastate organizations. They waste resources, kill productivity, and jeopardize the achievement of goals.”

Are there silos in your ad department? If so, maybe it’s time to put down some markers to let others know what’s going on.

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



# Artificial Intelligence

## It's crucial to make a plan before you jump in too deep

Almost daily, I hear from longtime readers of my column who write to tell me they've recently benefited from something I wrote months or years ago. I suppose it's why I keep writing these columns after all these years.

Just this morning, I heard from a publisher who wrote that he had begun using an application I wrote about three years ago and was finding it very helpful. Another wrote yesterday to tell me she had followed my advice about holding a focus group made up of community members, some newspaper readers, and some non-readers. She wanted me to know that it was incredibly beneficial to her paper, and they had made several changes based on the results of the focus group.

Recently, I've heard from a lot of folks asking for advice related to artificial intelligence. Press association directors have written to ask if I would lead a convention session or webinar on the topic (yes, I plan to offer a webinar on AI soon). I even responded to a request from an industry journal in Australia and Southeast Asia to get my thoughts concerning a photo that had run in a major publication there using AI. Every time I read a story from that part of the world, I'm convinced they have a knack for writing great headlines. The headline for that story was "Tummy tat a croptop giveaway, and Slimp says, 'Never in news.'"

I realize the use of AI is a fact of life in today's world. However, the use of artificial intelligence requires much the same scrutiny as was given to photo editing when applications like Photoshop and Photostyle became available almost 40 years ago.

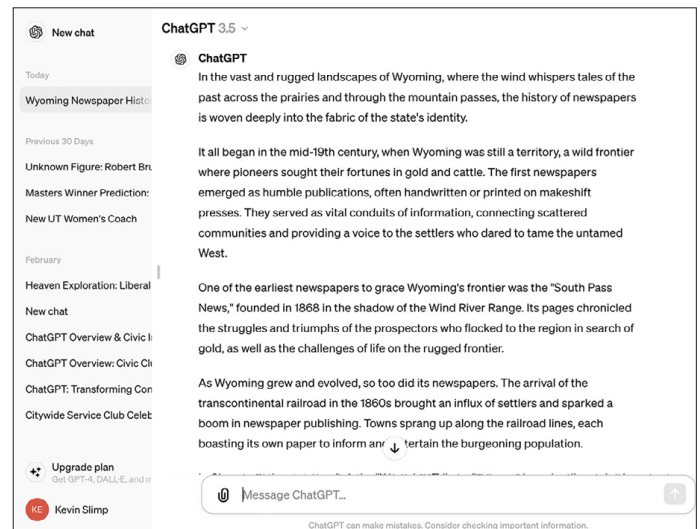
In the early days of

Photoshop, it was almost scary for me to face a crowd of veteran photographers. Even the use of tools we take for granted today, like adjusting levels or sharpening an image, was met with much deliberation among audiences. Longtime photographers, especially from major dailies, often protested that nothing could be adjusted in a photo. If that became the industry standard, my Photoshop classes wouldn't have lasted very long.

In the same way, we need to be very careful about the way we use AI. It would be simplistic to say that we not use it all. Much of the software we are already using had built-in AI features. However, I am suggesting that we give the use of AI even more scrutiny than we did Photoshop a few decades ago. I agree with writer Kelly McBride that every newspaper needs an ethics policy related to the use of artificial intelligence (poynter.org, March 25, 2024). Kelly's column includes a starter kit to give newspapers a starting point for addressing the use of AI.

Looking back at the early days of Photoshop, I would emphasize that the use of Photoshop shouldn't be to improve or alter an image. Instead, the goal was to make the image printed on the page appear as close to the original photo as possible. Knowing that dot gain, ink limits, quality of paper stock, and other variables affected the printed image, photo editing applications offered tools to offset distortions that would otherwise appear on the printed page.

Much has been written about the use of artificial intelligence in the workplace. In our industry, it's even



more crucial that we give the use of AI serious thought before diving in too deep. It would be easy to ignore the issue altogether. That would be naive. On the other hand, it's easy – especially for those of us who have a bit of “tech nerd” built into our DNA – to get overly excited about the use of AI. Let me caution against both extremes.

We will be using AI in our work. You probably already are. However, be very careful when and how AI is used.

I was invited to speak at a local civic club in Knoxville a couple of weeks ago. They asked me to speak on the topic of artificial intelligence. I learned the audience was larger than usual and noticed that some of the folks brought pads and pens to write notes. Many were business owners, and they obviously had a lot of interest in the topic.

Before I spoke my first word, a hand went up. “Is AI going to put us all out of business?” a man in the third row asked.

I spoke to the group for about 30 minutes and spoke of the limitations and dan-

gers of AI. I'm relatively sure everyone felt, by the time I finished, that their worlds wouldn't be crashing in anytime soon from the use of artificial intelligence.

This week, I'm part of an international conference made up of more than 1,000 participants in Charlotte, North Carolina. As attendees come by to meet me, they often tell me they're from “a little town you've never heard of.” In most cases, I'm pleased to tell them, “I've visited your town while working with the newspaper.” So far, every person has gone on to tell me how much they loved the community newspaper in their town.

Sometimes we forget how much people love and appreciate us. And sometimes we forget how important – and serious – our work is. Thank you for making a difference.



Kevin Slimp is a popular consultant, advisor and trainer in the newspaper industry. From 1997-2018, Kevin directed The Newspaper Institute of The University of Tennessee. He currently serves as CEO of Market Square Publishing and Chief Guru at NewspaperAcademy.com.

Kevin Slimp, “The News Guru”  
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May has Mother's Day and June has Father's Day so I will address both holidays this month. That way I can cover both...

# Moms & Dads

## Ad Talk with Ellen Hanrahan

A great deal of the time my co-workers and I used art of some type. You know my feeling on vector (*illustrator*) artwork, but there are many times when a photo is the better choice. Photographs score higher and readers would still rather see a real photo—even if they don't know the people in the picture!

I've made-up some ads using both types of artwork found in past years from **METRO® Newspaper Service**. Since I'm in control, the ads will fit these columns at 14p8 width which is a bit narrower than our regular two-column ad format of 19p10, but the ads will still be 3" deep — our regular 17p4.75 pica depth.



### Vector Art

I thought this illustration of a mom sitting with her boy and husband was perfect for the ad I wanted to create.

I've reduced the art to 35% of its original size. While this is a pretty compact graphic, I am still going to have to make some adjustments to have it fit into the ad space that I have.

I reduced the art another 2% to fit in the ad; cropped the dad; and put a directional feather on the bottom portion of the family so that I can fit the name of the restaurant in the ad without getting lost in the art..

I've used **House Industries Chalet Book** for text, **Funkydori** for the heading and **Thirsty Soft Bold** for the restaurant name.

### How About a Photo?

I will leave the type basically the same for both ads. I didn't spend a lot of time with the type because the focus is on the art.

Let's take the same ad and see how we might be able to include a photo. I chose a photo of a mother and her older daughters.

There are many websites that offer stock photography suitable for your needs, and it's fairly easy to find one that fits your budget. We used Metro in the past, but since I am "on my own," I've found [www.storyblocks.com](http://www.storyblocks.com) suitable for my needs.



For the ad below, headline type was changed to **Adobe's Handwriting Frank** because I was looking for a slightly more casual look. The other change was to center the copy, but point size and fonts used are the same as the ad in column one.

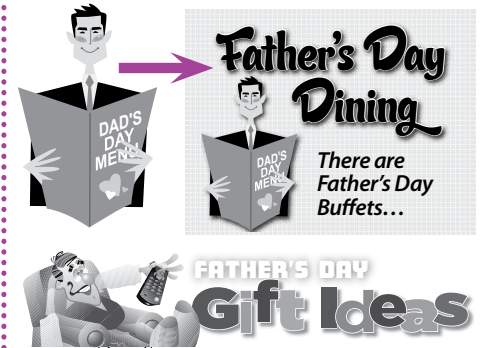
The photo was placed at the same size as above— 40%. But I used gradients to give me a bit more space!

You could also forgo any art in an ad such as this. An elegant type and decorative border could also work well. But our purpose is to find different ways to work with parts or pieces of the original artwork.

# Father's Day

The celebration of Father's Day, unfortunately, does not fit the same criteria or pattern as Mother's Day advertising. No flowers, candy, dinners are promoted. If anything, dad is usually grilling out and a lot of Father's Day advertising is best suited under headings, since most gifts for dad come from hardware, sports or home center stores (maybe a liquor store thrown in as well).

Once again, vector art to the rescue. All those little elements can help tie ad groupings together—or be a part of smaller ads.



Father's Day is Sun, June 16



Vector art is so flexible! There is no degradation in sizing and you always have the option of using just parts of the artwork.

There are a lot of ways to fit artwork into an ad. Other times a distinctive typeface is all you need— like Bermuda LP Squiggle!

SHOW DAD YOU CARE!

Or make the text large and use the art to enhance — type is Candyscript with crown artwork. By the way, this would work with other words as well.

Dads

### Final Thoughts...

Still working to get rid of (or find replacements) for my Type 1 fonts. What I need to do is just take an afternoon to at least delete them, but since 1982, I have so many typefaces, yet, use only a portion of them. *Until next time...*

I was a student, an art teacher, a graphic designer, a writer and again a student. For info, PDFs of articles, or have ideas or comments, e-mail: [hanrahan.ln@att.net](mailto:hanrahan.ln@att.net) Ellen Hanrahan © 05/2024

**Celebrate Mom**

She's the center of the family, so treat Mom to a special dinner celebration with her favorite people and favorite foods.

**Mother's Day Buffet**  
Sunday May 12 • 4-8pm  
\$20 Adults • \$9 Kids

Featuring Mom's choice of entrée with a delicious selection of sides, followed by coffee and our world-famous dessert buffet!

**The GreenTree Restaurant**  
5780 Wheaton Avenue • Eden Ridge  
555-323-5511

**Celebrate Mom**

She's the center of the family, so treat Mom to a special dinner celebration with her favorite people and favorite foods.

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Sunday May 12 • 4-8pm  
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5780 Wheaton Avenue • Eden Ridge  
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# 3 Tweaks to Make Your Next Sales Call a Success

*With Sales Coach Ryan Dohrn*

In my media sales training sessions, a recurring question emerges: “How do you manage to achieve substantial sales while juggling numerous commitments such as speaking engagements, running conferences, and maintaining a marriage of 29 years with someone while overseeing multiple businesses?” The answer, I believe, lies in becoming a time management ninja and also having a comprehensive “3D sales strategy” – three dimensions crucial for my success in the dynamic world of advertising sales. The first dimension involves effective prospecting, the second revolves around conducting impactful meetings with advertising prospects, and the third focuses on closing the deal with style and ease.

Before delving into the intricacies of my strategy, let me clarify a common misconception. I’m not inherently super-organized or strategically wired in my approach to media sales and ad sales training. Quite the contrary, I’ve found success by embracing simplicity and relying on the power of three. Three words in email subject lines, three sentences maximum in email bodies, three pricing proposals on each advertising sales calls, and follow-ups every third business day. It’s a rhythm that keeps me focused and organized without overwhelming complexity.

Now, let’s explore these insights further – three simple tweaks designed for individuals like you to incorporate into your advertising sales call strategy, enhancing business success.

## **Tweak #1:**

**Identify Your Prospect’s Unique Advertising Business Problem:** When you enter meetings



with the goal of securing lifelong customers in advertising sales, start by engaging your prospect in a conversation about their most pressing business problems related to advertising. Dive deep to uncover the scale and duration of the advertising issue, seeking to understand the steps they’ve taken to address it. This approach positions you as the solution provider and an advisor, aiming to alleviate their advertising pain and create a lasting impact.

Understanding the unique challenges your advertising prospects face is pivotal. Imagine asking them, “If I could wave a magic wand and eliminate one of the pain points your

business has right now, what would that be? How could I be the biggest help to you?” This not only unveils their pain points but also positions you as the potential remedy, aligning your marketing products or services with their needs.

## **Tweak #2:**

**Move from Seller to Advisor:** Building on the first tweak, the next step involves identifying the duration of your prospect’s major pain points related to advertising or their business. How long has this issue persisted? Delve into the timeline, understanding the journey your prospect has taken in attempting to mitigate the advertising or business problem. What actions have they undertaken, and how effective have these measures been? This step provides valuable insights into their experience and sets the stage for you to move from being a seller to being an advisor. Salespeople sell stuff. Advisors get paid to recommend solutions.

Understanding the duration of your prospect’s advertising problem is akin to understanding the context of their struggle. Have they been grappling with this challenge for a month, a year, or even longer? This information equips you to tailor your approach, recommending marketing solutions that not only address their current needs but also consider the longevity of their pain points. This is where you move into full time advisor role. Meaning you don’t sell... you tell about your recommendations to relieve their pain. In addition, this is time of the sales call where you will also share the successes other advertisers have had with your media company. Stay ethical in what you share. Focus on longevity with your media brand rather than results of a specific campaign. Now, if you have case studies to share, do it. But, you do not need specific campaign data to share that an advertising client loves working with you and your company. (Continued on next page.)

## 3 Tweaks Continued...

### Tweak #3:

Make Closing the Sale Easy for You and the Advertiser: The third aspect of the 3D advertising sales strategy is psychological. After you have recommended marketing solutions based on the success of other advertisers, then it is time to close the sale. I like to use the 1-10 closing technique. You say, "On a scale of 1-10, where one means you are really not interested and 10, where you are ready to cut me a check, where are you?" Prompt your advertising prospects to admit where they are at with you and the sale. If they say five, then you answer their questions and try and get them to an eight or nine on the scale. If they are a four, answer their questions and try and get them to be a six or seven.

This admission sets the stage for a winning scenario, especially if your advertising product or service aligns seamlessly with their needs and they just need a gentle nudge. In addition, this last tweak helps you as it is a natural way to close out a meeting. During this last tweak, encourage your advertising prospects to voice their challenges aloud. Have them admit that this has been a problem for an extended period, and they've explored various avenues, but the issue still lingers. This admission not only reinforces the severity of their need but also positions you as the agent of change, the individual or entity capable of making a significant difference in their advertising and business endeavors.

Concluding each of these points, emphasize the necessity of having a systematic plan for every advertising sales call, advocating for a structured approach. Whether it's identifying the customer's advertising problem, determining its duration, or assessing previous attempts at resolution, every advertising sales meeting should follow a similar plan. Adapt to the unique qualities of each advertising client, remembering the importance of flexibility within the overall strategy.

In media sales training, a common observation is the absence of a systematic approach on sales calls. Recognizing the need for a roadmap in advertising sales, understanding the significance of following this 3D process is paramount. The objective is clear: build deeper relationships with advertising customers, providing actionable insights for immediate implementation.

Advertising sales is a challenging field. With these simple tweaks, I firmly believe you can utilize the 3D advertising sales strategy to not only achieve greater sales success but also identify repeatable patterns and position yourself as a problem solver AKA "advisor" in the ever-evolving landscape of advertising sales.

Never forget, if sales was easy, everyone would be doing it. They are not. You are a part of the chosen few selling and looking to impact the business of your clients for years to come.

Ryan Dohrn has trained over 30,000 salespeople and works monthly with over 200 media sellers. Plus, he still sells media every day too. Learn more online at <http://360AdSales.com>



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WEBSITE BUILDER

There are **28 MILLION** Small Businesses in the US

Nearly **40%** still do NOT have a website

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We're more than just a website builder. We provide everything you need to build a profitable web design business.

Contact us today! [www.SiteSwan.com](http://www.SiteSwan.com)



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## **YOU'D BETTER SHOP AROUND:**

# **These Michigan business facts point to one truth: MORE ADVERTISING IS NEEDED!**

CPM is a very interesting group for many reasons, and it has a diverse collection of members representing multiple types and sizes of publications. We proudly deal with large and small companies that often **NEED** our services more than they realize (and admit). Here are six facts about doing business in Michigan which have one thing in common:

**THESE TRUTHS REMIND OUR CUSTOMERS TO DO MORE ADVERTISING – AND THAT'S WHERE OUR MEMBER PAPERS COME IN !!**

### **business fact #1**

**Use of credit cards grows by 13% each year. To benefit from this, small companies must offer as many convenient payment options as possible.**

### **business fact #2**

**12% of small businesses make over \$1 million annually. The industries poised for most growth are in technology, health and energy fields.**

### **business fact #3**

**82% of small businesses that fail do so because of cash flow problems.  
14% FAIL BECAUSE OF POOR MARKETING.**

### **business fact #4**

**46% of small businesses are unsure whether their marketing and advertising programs are working. Another 17% know their marketing ISN'T working.**

### **business fact #5**

**41% of small business owners are Republicans; 22% are Democrats and 32% are "unaffiliated."  
Women own 41% of all U.S. non-employer small businesses.**

### **business fact #6**

**92% of business owners believe a website is the most effective digital marketing strategy.  
10% don't invest in any type of marketing at all.**





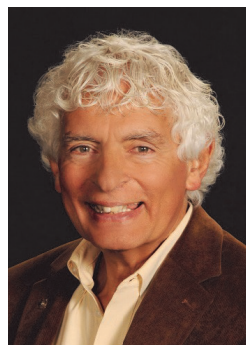
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