

June **2024**
INFORMER



**Community
Papers of
Michigan**

Wow! The Year 2024 Is Half Over Already

From The Executive Director, Don Rush

If you're like me, you woke up a day or so ago and had the epiphany: Holy Cow, where did January, February, March, April, May and now most of June go? Then, if you're like me, you look at your desk calendar and start contemplating the goals and objectives set at the beginning of the year.

It's time to take a moment, breathe deeply, reflect on your set goals, and maybe change directions to get back on course.

In regards to mid-year goals, I went online to find what better writers than I wrote, and found the following from Gospel Edet on Linked-in. I shortened it up to save page space.

EMBRACE JUNE AND ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS

1. Reflect and Realign: Begin by reflecting on your goals and the progress you've

made so far. Celebrate your accomplishments and identify areas where you may have fallen short.

2. Revise and Set New Milestones: With a clearer understanding of your progress and where you want to go, it's time to revise and set new milestones. Break down your goals into smaller, manageable tasks or milestones that can be achieved in the coming months.

3. Prioritize and Focus: Prioritize your goals and focus on what truly matters. Identify the key areas that require your attention and allocate your time, energy, and resources accordingly. Make a habit of saying "no" to non-essential tasks or commitments.

4. Create an Action Plan: To turn your goals into reality, you need a well-defined action plan. Break down each

milestone into actionable steps and create a roadmap to guide your progress. Set deadlines for each task and establish a routine that allows you to consistently work towards your goals.

5. Cultivate Positive Habits and Mindset: Cultivate positive habits and a mindset that supports your goals. This includes adopting healthy routines, managing your time effectively, and nurturing self-discipline. Surround yourself with positive influences and seek support from like-minded individuals who can motivate and inspire you.

6. Seek Accountability and Support: Share your goals and milestones with someone you trust, such as a friend, family member, or mentor. By verbalizing your intentions, you create a sense of responsibility and commitment.

Saying Goodbye Is Hard To Do - This month it was announced the View Newspaper group purchased the J-Ad Graphic group in Hastings, from Fred Jacobs. His two children, Jon Jacobs and Jenny Yonker, will stay on with the new company and his other daughter Carrie Larabee will take over the commercial printing side of the business which wasn't part of the sale. Fred has been a leader in his community for decades. He has been a leader for this trade association and the community paper industry as well. With the purchase Fred retired from the board. His historic and industry knowledge will not be replaced. Here's his message:



"It's been a long-time relationship that goes back to the 1970's -- I was president (of the CPM Board of Directors) sometime in the 1980's, don't have the actual date - I was looking for the actual date, but it really doesn't matter. I plan to stay busy helping with the commercial printing and I still have all the real estate and web-printing equipment to sell, so I'm not really retired. I just stepped off the treadmill for a while. I've always enjoyed my time with CMP and have lots of memories of so many great people that I've met and worked with over the years. I still think community papers are important to their communities and due to the loss of so many daily newspapers throughout the country, it's community newspapers that must fill the void they've walked away from."

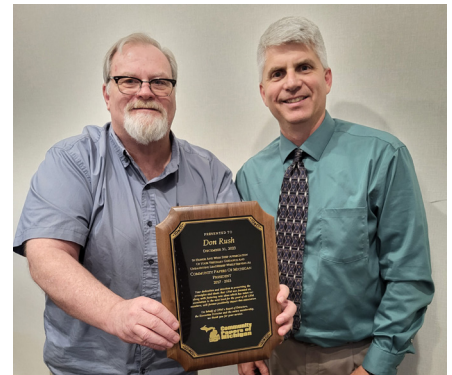
Thank you, Fred!

Recognized! At its June meeting the Board of Directors recognized Jack Guza. Jack recently retired as CPM Executive Director. He served this trade association for over 24 years! He served as a Board Member from 1999-2004, as Board President from 2004-2008 and as Executive Director from 2008 to the end of 2023.

Thank you, Jack.



CPM President Marty Bennett, right, presented former CPM Executive Director Jack Guza with a plaque in recognition of his 24 years of service to this trade association.



CPM President Marty Bennett presenting your current Executive Director, Don Rush with a plaque in recognition for his service on the Board of Directors, the last six years as Board President.

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 June!

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

What you want to know

My inbox and physical mailbox stay full with requests from readers

By Kevin Slimp

It has already been a busy summer, and I'm not sure summer has officially begun (It's June 1 as I write this). Upon returning from my latest trip – to Pennsylvania – yesterday, I was greeted by a stack of packages from publishers – most containing newspapers to critique – and an email folder with plenty of messages from editors, designers, and publishers.

To keep all the newspapers I receive from getting wet, I purchased a waterproof container about the size of a pirate's treasure chest, which I placed on the porch by my front door. The mail deliverers and UPS drivers have become well acquainted with my box.

What's on the mind of newspaper folks these days? The answer is "a lot." Whoever first coined the phrase "newspapers are dead" in the early 2000s apparently never had to go through my email or my box.

Growing Readership

The most common question I receive is, "What can I do to get more readers?" That hasn't changed in the 30 years I've been working with newspa-

pers. We always seem to be looking for a magic potion to make more people want to read our products. I've addressed that question many times in these columns, often with a list of ways to grow papers, but most often, the answer comes down to improving the quality of the newspaper.

Quality is a funny thing. It encompasses more than the "look" of a newspaper. It includes writing high-caliber stories that meet the reading desires of potential readers. Quality entails research, such as focus groups, to understand what readers want – and don't want – in their newspaper. And obviously, the importance of design can't be overestimated.

Improving the Product

The packages in my front porch box usually contain newspapers to be critiqued. Upgrading the content and design of your newspaper should be at the forefront of growing your paper. That doesn't mean you have to send your paper to me. This means that your paper should develop a method of critiquing every element of content regularly. But couldn't I just



Critiquing newspapers includes detailed examination of the printed pages. My delivery folks have come to expect a lot of newspapers showing up in my box while I'm away on trips.

look at these pages on the screen? Sure, but seriously evaluating a newspaper requires taking notes on the pages. After I critique a page, it generally looks like someone has bled all over it.

Increasing Ad Revenue

Increasing revenue is on everyone's mind. I can't remember a time when it wasn't. I lead a lot of webinars on various topics. There was a time when photo editing or page design classes would be the most popular. These days, sessions related to increasing revenue draw the biggest crowds.

I've written my

share of columns on increasing revenue, but the best way I know of to increase ad sales is to go out and visit more potential advertisers physically. It sounds simplistic, but those of you who have been around the block a few times know it's true. Don't worry. If you happen to be signed up for one of my future webinars on increasing ad rev-

enue, I'll have more to share than "just get out more." However, if you want to sell more ads, just get out more. It works.

Next up for me? North Carolina, Virginia, then over to see my friends at Arkansas Press Association. When I return home, I imagine the box next to my door will be full.



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"

kevin@kevinslimp.com



By
Mark W.
Rummel
Fenton, MI

YOU'D BETTER SHOP AROUND:
**Here's what happens
when we let A.I.
do the writing**

We've talked in the past about experimenting with using **Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) writing** to put words together for us. Now, we find there are many internet sites where this can be done today. It's actually amazing how **A.I.** works, so we wanted to apply it to one topic presented three different ways. The **A.I.** program I randomly chose was asked to answer these similar questions, using 50 words:

- HOW SHOULD I SPEND \$20 I FOUND?**
- HOW SHOULD I SPEND \$1,000 I WON?**
- HOW SHOULD I SPEND \$400 MILLION I WON?**

I originally told the **A.I.** program I had FOUND all three amounts, but that darn **A.I.** — it told me to try to locate the actual owner of the \$1,000 and \$400 million, which isn't nearly as much fun as spending it. Plus, **A.I.** wanted me to get police involved in a formal search for the owner, which isn't as enjoyable as just keeping the money, is it?

WHAT'S THE POINT? Any creative writer could produce DOZENS of stories on an unlimited number of topics in a short time. A full news staff — or even an advertising copywriter or two — is no longer needed. I actually estimated I could produce a full issue of a community paper within four hours... complete with **A.I.**-created stories, images, headlines and even ads. Since these are being created literally from thin air, **A.I.** doesn't involve plagiarism.

While **A.I.**-produced words seem basic and uninspiring, they're exploding into our culture... and we can't stop it!

In 50 words, answer this:

How should I spend \$20 I found?

Finding \$20 is a lucky treat! Here are some options:

- * Treat yourself. Enjoy a coffee, a book, or a small item you've been wanting.
- * Save it. Tuck it away for a rainy day or add it to a savings goal.
- * Do good. Pay for someone's coffee, donate to charity, or leave it at a store counter in case someone lost it.

The choice depends on your financial situation and priorities.

In 50 words, answer this:

How should I spend \$1,000 I won?

Winning \$1,000 is exciting! Here's a smart approach:

- * Secure your winnings. Set aside some for immediate needs or debt repayment.
- * Invest for the future. Consider a low-cost index fund for long-term growth, with a small portion for potential higher returns (research required).
- * Celebrate responsibly! Enjoy a splurge but prioritize your financial goals.

In 50 words, answer this:

How should I spend \$400 million I won?

Winning \$400 million is life-changing, but sudden wealth requires careful planning. Here's a winning roadmap:

- * Assemble your team. Consult a qualified financial advisor, tax attorney, and estate planner to create a comprehensive strategy.
- * Secure your winnings. Maintain anonymity (if allowed) and consider a lump sum payout over annuity payments.
- * Invest wisely. Diversify your portfolio with a mix of stocks, bonds, real estate, and alternative investments to manage risk.

Mark worked at papers in Saginaw, Port Huron and the Thumb Area, plus served on the CPM Board. He and wife Sally even worked for The Walt Disney Company. He also opened and ran a successful restaurant for 17 years. He's mostly retired but still does some social media work from Fenton, Mich. MarkWRummel@gmail.com



Media Sales Coach
Ryan Dohrn

Putting Human Touch Back Into Sales!

with Ryan Dohrn



What's going on, friends and fans? Ryan Dohrn here, your friendly neighborhood sales coach. Let's focus on what I like to call "sales humanity." It's a topic of conversation that I've been having with my ad sales training coaching clients and during my speaking engagements. It seems that the human side of sales is being overlooked, especially amidst all the conversations about AI in sales. I'm even considering making "sales humanity" a topic in one of my next sales books. So, let's explore a few ways to make sure we do not lose the human touch in the sales process.

ACTION ITEMS TO CONSIDER:

1. Shift from Salesperson to Advisor: Strive to be a trusted advisor rather than just a salesperson.

Focus on recommending solutions rather than pushing for a sale.

2. Be Helpful and Human: Always aim to be helpful in your interactions. Ask clients how you can assist them and what their ideal client referrals look like.

3. Avoid Outdated Sales Tactics: Stop using old-school closing techniques that don't resonate with modern buyers. Avoid being overly aggressive or pushy in your follow-ups.

4. Increase Non-Sales Touches: Ensure 30-35% of your client interactions are non-sales related. Share helpful articles, send handwritten notes, and show genuine appreciation.

5. Emphasize the Human Element in Sales:

Focus on building genuine relationships and being there for your clients. Remember that being human in sales can set you apart in the media sales training and ad sales training industry.

First, observe that salespeople often get a bad rap based on past behaviors and media portrayals, like in the movies *Tommy Boy*, *Boiler Room*, and *The Wolf of Wall Street*. When you tell someone you're in sales, they might wrinkle their nose because of years of bad salesmanship—salespeople willing to do anything to close a deal, never taking no for an answer, always being pushy. Those kinds of tactics are outdated. Instead, aim to be an advisor. Advisors recommend things and get paid for their expertise. They're trusted and referred by clients. As a salesperson, you should aim to be a peer with your customers, gaining their trust and respect.

Another important aspect of sales humanity is being helpful. One of the cores of being a good human being is offering help, whether someone needs time, directions, or advice. Stop just "checking in" with your clients. Instead, ask, "How can I help?" When granted a meeting, say, "Thank you for this meeting. There's probably something you were thinking I could do to be helpful. What is it?" Or ask, "What does a perfect client referral look like to you?" Always be a great referral source and be genuinely helpful.

Stop using outdated sales techniques like closing tactics. Statements like, "What you thought about yesterday is what someone else is thinking about today," just don't work

anymore. The youngest generations are highly researched and educated; they find such techniques offensive. Bring the humanity back into sales and stop pushing the close or following up too aggressively. Instead I like the 1-10 close. On a scale of 1-10 with one meaning you are not interested and ten meaning you love the idea, where are you after this conversation?

Lastly, increase your non-sales touches. Rather than making every email about selling, ensure that 30-35% of your outreach is about being helpful. Share articles, send handwritten thank you notes, or simply check in to see how you can assist them. These non-sales touches are part of the human element in sales that is often missing today.

This human-centered approach is crucial, especially in ad sales training and media sales training. By integrating empathy and genuine helpfulness into your sales strategy, you can build stronger relationships with your clients and enhance your effectiveness as a salesperson.

Putting humanity back into sales can only benefit all of us, right? Remember, if sales were easy, everyone would be doing it. We're not crazy; we're the chosen few. This is a great career that can feed your family for a lifetime.

– Ryan Dohrn

By adopting these principles, you can transform your sales approach and create lasting relationships with your customers.

Half the year has gone and I am still attending to update past issues, as well as keeping up with the software changes. So it's time to deal with a few...

Odds & Ends

I'm not sure where to start and I think I am in too deep with the **Adobe** products... and I am not getting any younger! Yes, I have purchased the **Affinity** line of software: **Affinity Designer**, **Publisher** and **Photo**... but that's basically all I have done, purchased them.

Did I say that I am not getting any younger? So of course **Adobe** has been extremely busy in updating, enhancing and developing new products and I am not sure I am even comfortable in using their products anymore.

Here's what I am writing about:

What's New with Adobe

Generate images with Text to Image

Let your imagination come to life with the Text to Image feature in **InDesign**. Powered by **Adobe Firefly**, this generative AI feature helps you create stunning images with a simple text prompt.

Currently, Text to Image is only available in the **InDesign** versions of English International and English North America.

Effortlessly convert PDFs to InDesign files in InDesign (Beta) to edit the layout and text while preserving design fidelity. Save time and streamline workflow by eliminating the need for external software, ensuring seamless integration and efficient PDF modification directly within **InDesign (Beta)**.

What are some of the new features of Photoshop 2024?

You can now adjust text alignment, spacing (leading and kerning), and font style (bolding, italicizing, underlining) directly from the Contextual Task Bar. To learn how to quickly access relevant tools and actions based on your current selection or context in your document, check out Contextual Task Bar in **Photoshop**.

Get improved results with Generative Fill and Generative Expand

Generative Fill and Generative Expand are now powered by **Adobe Firefly** Image 3 Model, which yields greatly improved photographic quality, precise controls, better prompt comprehension, and generation variety.

Generate Background (Beta)

Seamlessly remove and replace your background with generated content that matches the lighting, shadows, and perspective of the subject.

The above descriptions are from various Adobe pages and promos, but don't let their dialogue fool you. They use words like "stunning, efficient, seamless" and don't let the word "Beta" fool you either... it's coming and there's not much I can do about that. All this AI takes these software tools to an entirely new level.

It also appears that I have a lot more "investigating" to do. How some of these new features will help me to create print or multimedia advertising is still something that I need to explore.

Ad Talk

with Ellen Hanrahan

Design Details

What doesn't change is our ability to comprehend the design process. Yes there are trends in type, colors, focus, etc. but the functionality of design remains the same... to convey the message in the easiest, most effective way possible... and that hasn't changed in all my years working as a Graphic Designer.

Along with my current challenge of deleting all my **Type 1** fonts, I revisit some of the internet sites that I have come across.

One website that has remained current is overthinkingdesign.com— thoughts about design and art by Jason Horst of **Piksl Design**— still a treasure trove of detailed information!

It's not a specific rule-based site, but presents workable decisions for the small details that can make your design work better.

"How to write AM and PM," "Periods in Phone Numbers," "The Initial Caps Trap," "Drop the Shadows," "How to Make a Bad Photo Look Good," and more. For example, over the last 30-odd years I usually write AM and PM like this: 7:00am or 8:00pm.

After reading the article— which is quite thorough— I came away with a slightly different perspective. It is not about the "correct" way to write them because style guidelines vary, it's more about the most pleasing and readable. I will probably continue to create my AM and PM the way I have usually done. (Note: I am pretty close to the most pleasing and easiest to read.) This site offers explanations and discussions of the many ways of handling these details. For example:

Making Text Bold

Making text bold is a common typesetting/design practice that people use to make it stand out and to call attention to it. However, you need to look at the other elements in the design. Too many bold typefaces diminishes the impact, strong graphics can add to "visual clutter." So for text to stand out, it has to be relative to the other elements on the page.

Bold text is also less readable than type of regular weight, and using it sparingly can make it more effective.

There are other options for making areas of text stand out without automatically making the text bold especially in a small point size.

There is also discussion on using bold text on websites which addresses some of the concerns regarding the use of this medium to get the concept or ideas across to the reader.

There are other web...and print...typeface weights that could be used for the most appropriate use in the message.

Check out this website to get a clearer understanding that while fonts vary, it still is about contrast, readability, legibility and moderation.

Brands of the World

I was cleaning up my internet "favorites" and I came across a website that I used to use quite a bit. At times, the sales associate would bring in a logo from a national brand that was really bit-mapped/distorted, so the first place I would turn to was a website that could offer "clean" national brands:

www.brandsoftheworld.com

Brands of the World has the world's largest collection of freely downloadable vector logos. You can even upload logos to showcase your work and help fellow designers (upload your logo to get feedback from your peers and you can critique other logos as well). They also have iStock images.

I can't guarantee you will find every brand, but they have a good selection of national and international brands—in vector format— sizing is not a problem!

They also have various tag lines attached to the logos and I've included a few samples below...



Final Thoughts

Just read column one and you may have already figured out what my final thoughts are! Keep learning and I have a strong hunch I will be working to get rid of (or find replacements) for my **Type 1** fonts for way longer than I thought! Yet, I use only a portion of them.

We are downsizing and with a possible move in the next two years, you can probably guess that my "to do" list is somewhat overwhelming!

In the meantime, I'll try to learn one new software function per month...and I'll keep you informed on my progress— so wish me luck with that as well!

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.jn@att.net Ellen Hanrahan © 06/2024



Ad - Libs

BY JOHN FOUST



Sunshine In The Weather Forecast

I remember attending a graduation ceremony for a class of nursing students. One of the speakers – who was also one of their instructors – said, “You help create the atmosphere in the room – for your patients, their families, your coworkers, and the doctors and technicians with whom you work. Your feelings have an impact, whether those feelings are cheerful or sad, optimistic or fearful.” She referred to a speech she heard at a healthcare convention. That speaker compared the mood of healthcare workers to the weather. Is it sunny and cheerful? Or rainy and dreary?

Nursing is a noble profession. As my wife and I listened, we couldn’t help but think of the medical appointments we’ve had through the years, and the nurses who have lifted our spirits. The weather comparison is an accurate description – and a poignant challenge.

My former dentist (now retired) had a

hygienist named Carolyn. In addition to being extraordinarily skilled, she had a joyful personality that immediately put people at ease. She greeted each patient with comments like, “Let’s see how good things are looking today.” Then she made positive comments about the patient’s dental health as she worked. Sometimes there were surprises. In one of my appointments, I noticed that she had pinned a large poster of a horse on the ceiling above the chair. “Since you’re going to stare at the ceiling while I check your teeth,” she said, “you might as well look at a nice picture.”

It was always sunny in Carolyn’s office. There’s an old saying that some people brighten the room by arriving and others brighten the room by leaving. In the years I went to that dentist, she always brightened the room.

The famous Li’l Abner comic strip had a character named Joe Btfsplk, who always

had a dark cloud over his head. That cloud of negativity followed poor Joe everywhere he went. (Don’t ask how to pronounce Joe’s last name.)

We’ve all met salespeople who travel around with dark clouds over their heads. They just don’t realize that no one wants to do business with – much less, buy anything from – someone with a cloudy attitude.

Those salespeople need a strong dose of Carolyn’s cheerfulness. Her approach was simple: (1) Sincerely welcome each patient as though that person were her most important appointment of the day; (2) Find specific and positive things to say about the patient’s dental situation throughout the appointment; and (3) Send each person away with a good feeling about the outcome of the appointment. (Nothing was faked; she meant every word.)

The same goes for your advertising interactions, whether you’re having a great day or whether you’ve just lost a big sale. Look at each conversation as a new start. (1) Open with a sincere smile and a word of cheer; (2) Be sure to point out the positives of the topic at hand along the way; and (3) Close the meeting with good news about the next step.

Try Carolyn’s technique and bring good weather into your next sales conversation.

(c) Copyright 2024 by John Foust. All rights reserved.

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





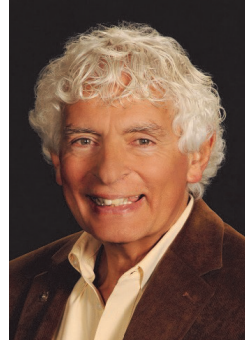
Marty Bennett
CPM President
Community Shoppers Guide
117 N. Farmer - P.O. Box 168 Otsego,
MI 49078
Phone: 269-694-9431
Fax: 269-694-9145
Cell: 269-370-9469
info@communityshoppersguide.net



Wes Smith
Director
View Newspaper Group
1521 Imlay City Rd.
Lapeer, MI 48446
Phone: 810-664-0811
Fax: 810-667-6309
Cell: 810-338-7888
wsmith@mihomepaper.com



Cindy Gaedert-Gearhart
Vice President
County Journal, Flashes
Advertising & News
241 S. Cochran Ave.,
Charlotte, MI 48813
Office: 517-543-1099 Ext.225
Cell: 269-209-3532
Fax: 517-543-1993
CGWING@county-journal.com



George Moses
Director
The Marketeer
110 E. North St., Suite A Brighton,
MI 48116
Phone: 810-227-1575
Fax: 810-227-8189
Cell: 517-404-7807
gmoses@georgemosesco.com



Jon Jacobs
Secretary/Treasurer
Buyers Guide
P.O. Box 128
Lowell, MI 49331
Phone: 616-897-9555
Cell: 269-208-9223
Fax: 616-897-4809
Jon@lowellbuyersguide.com



Jeff Demers
Director
C&G Newspapers
13650 11 Mile Road
Warren, MI 48089
Cell: 586-291-1874
Fax: 586-498-9631
jdemers@candgnews.com



Don Rush, Executive Director
donrush@cpapersmi.com



Dana Risner, Business Manager
danarisner@cpapersmi.com



**Community
Papers of
Michigan**

10120 Hegel Road, Goodrich, MI, 48438
Phone/Fax: (800)783-0267
mifreeads.com