

November 2024 **INFORMER**



*Happy
Thanksgiving!*



**Community
Papers of
Michigan**



Thankful this November

From The Executive Director, Don Rush

Happy Thanksgiving, everyone! As we enter the holiday season, it's important to recognize how fortunate each of us is. We are fortunate for family, friends, employment and a million other things that have touched our lives. Personally, at night before I slip off into slumber, I say a little prayer thanking God for everyone he has put before me. Each person has helped shape a better version of myself. My life would be less rich had even one person, no matter how distant, not been in my life.

At work, it's time to thank your employer, fellow employees and all your customers. A nod, a card, a call – something to recognize them. When I was ad manager at the Clarkston News, each Thanksgiving edition, I would run a full-page house ad thanking all who advertised with us that year. I would go through each edition and write down who advertised and I would then run all those business and individuals' names in the house ad.

Each year I was amazed by the sheer volume of names on that page! While it wasn't much, I wanted to make sure each advertiser was listed – to get their name out in front of our readers one more time, at no cost to them. (Also, in the back of my mind I wanted to show how relevant our paper was by showcasing all those businesses who trusted us to deliver their messages. I hoped to gain more advertisers by association. "If all these businesses are marketing with them, well dang-it, maybe I should, too!")

I thank Community Papers of Michigan's Board of Directors for the opportunity to help our trade association grow. I also thank Dana Risner, CPM's Business Manager. Without her – well, I just don't like to think about it!

Side note to all who speak or write: When thanking someone, thank them. If you say, or write, "I would like to thank so and so . . ." what you are really saying is, "I would like to thank so and so, but I'm not going to." Just say, "Thank you, so and so."

He shoots, he S.C.O.R.E.S!

Way back in September I read an article in the Editor & Publisher e-edition. Written by columnist

Richard E. Brown, headlined, "**Driving revenue growth with the S.C.O.R.E. framework.**" I found it an interesting article about strategic planning and "revenue management." Here's a quote to help sum up the practice.

"The S.C.O.R.E. framework helps revenue leaders ensure their growth strategies are scalable, collaborative, organic, replicable and empowering. It filters and refines ideas to align with long-term goals and deliver meaningful results. This approach balances immediate innovation with sustainable growth, turning strategy into a clear, enduring vision."

Wrote Brown, "News media can be a fast-paced environment, and it's easy to become overwhelmed, especially when resources are limited and difficult decisions about budget cuts or reallocations must be made. This constant drive to stay ahead often leads to innovation fatigue, where the pressure to keep producing new ideas can cloud judgment and hinder long-term planning. Reflecting on these experiences, I've noticed that successful strategies often share key traits that make them effective and sustainable and help revenue leaders navigate the complex process of communicating innovation.

To address this challenge, I developed the S.C.O.R.E. framework — a tool designed to evaluate and communicate strategies and guide the entire innovation process."

S.C.O.R.E. is an acronym for Scalability, Collaborative, Organic, Replicable and Empowering. In part, here's what he wrote

Scalability: When evaluating a growth strategy, start by asking if it's scalable. Focus on more than just the launch details. Consider if the strategy can grow, handle larger volumes, reach broader audiences and make a more significant impact. A scalable strategy should be efficient, manageable and capable of expanding without sacrificing quality.

Collaborative: After confirming scalability, prioritize collaboration. In the competitive news media landscape, strong partnerships drive growth. Effective collaboration within and

beyond organizations is essential. Collaborative approaches pool resources, share insights and tackle challenges more effectively.

Organic: Check if the opportunity your strategy targets is already emerging organically. If groups or your team are already engaging with it, your strategy will likely gain traction quickly. When the demand is organically driven, it means the community or market is already signaling a need for change, and those organizations that are nimble and focused can capitalize on these opportunities.

Replicable: Building on organic opportunities, evaluate whether your growth strategy is replicable. This means assessing if successful elements can be consistently applied in new areas or markets. A replicable strategy should be designed for scalability and adaptability, providing a framework for consistent results in various settings.

Empowering: Lastly, ensure your strategy is empowering. Empowerment is crucial for growth because it actively involves and motivates stakeholders — audience, colleagues, journalists, sponsors, donors, board members and the community. When stakeholders feel genuinely valued and integral to your mission, their engagement deepens.

Here's the link to his entire article: <https://www.editorandpublisher.com/stories/the-score-strategy-framework-for-sustainable-news-media-growth.251750>

Again, thank you everyone and wishing you all a wonderful, love-filled Thanksgiving.

HAPPY
Thanks
GIVING

Thanksgiving is a time for the closeness of family, getting together, and more than enough to eat—but in Wisconsin (and I'm sure Michigan as well) there is the annual ritual of bonding, bright orange, and the thrill of the hunt, the ...

Ad Talk

with Ellen Hanrahan

DEER HUNT

This is Wisconsin... and soon, the hunters in our state don the "blaze orange" and head for their favorite area for the annual rite of "Deer Hunting Season." Since orange is really not my color, I thought that I could still share in the sport by presenting ads that one local business ran at this time of the year.

The advertiser below changed the ad size that year to a 2x5 (instead of the 2x4 from the previous year) because of more information, so it's not exactly a side-by-side comparison, but the smaller ad could benefit from the elements and principles used in the 2x5 ad. If we go back to the idea of using contrast, repetition, alignment and proximity, (as used in **Ad B**) we can better organize and emphasize **Ad A**. The artwork is the same, although the interior content has been greatly altered. The ads themselves were scaled to fit the space (74%).

Ad B has a lot more impact because like items were grouped together and the contrast of the pricing in the black and gray boxes not only calls attention to this info, but helps to create a hierarchy by size and placement of these items. Remember that our eye takes in "groupings" of items or words. Make it easy for the reader to find the who, what, when and where info without having to search for it. In the text below, I go into a little more detail regarding the changes.

elaborate directional in **Ad A**. It almost looks like an extension of Will Lange's name.

Notice how the reverse boxes are set up in **Ad B**. They align at the edges which also helps in eye flow. They are consistent in size and the contrast also helps define which info is most important, but it also helps to unify the space within the ad border. This ad looks as if there was a plan in placing the text to get the most out of the space, while making it easy for the reader to navigate.

Organization

The most "creative" ad is not always the most effective. A graphic designer is a conduit to get a message to the most people and have that message be easy to understand and remember. Through the years I have tried to focus on the designing part, although the tools that we use now are so much faster, and have taken a lot of the repetitive aspect of our craft to let us focus more on the best way to inform our readers. However, even that will be changing as AI becomes more seamless. Nonetheless, remember that human interaction is still the best way to communicate.

Final Thoughts

As we know from our industry, change is inevitable. So too is this point in my life. I will be turning to other endeavors in the future, and unfortunately preparing these articles is taking time from some of the things that I need to do. I need to get really serious about "downsizing" as my husband and I think about our future. We plan to move next year and with all the changes that are developing with the software and other tools I use, it's just becoming more complicated... and time-consuming.

I've come a long way since Robert W. Munn contacted me about doing an article for the Independent Free Papers of America (IFPA), in 1995 and I would like to take a bit of time next year to discuss past, present and the future of being a Graphic Designer. I will do a December article for the **Informer**, but my last column will be January of 2025.

I am grateful for all the years I have hopefully helped anyone in understanding the design process, and I am thankful for all those in the publishing industry who have read some of the advice I have given. Bless you...



I'm a former art teacher & graphic designer—for info, PDFs of articles, or have ideas or comments, e-mail: hanrahan.ln@att.net Ellen Hanrahan ©11/2024

A

DEER CUTTER

Cut while you wait "Appointment"
You take cuts & trims home

Skinning
Cutting **\$45**
Gun season only



TOP CASH FOR YOUR HIDES

Hours: November 17-26 7am-6pm
November 22 7am-10am

Wildcat Road, 3/4 mile west of Cty E
(3 miles north of Hustisford)
5555 Wildcat Road, watch for signs

555-5555 • Will Lange
"Please Bring Containers"



* Typeface selection can make or break an ad. I have a few fonts that I rely on, sort of my go-to fonts because I know how they will fit in the amount of space I have. Most times, condensed typefaces are actually harder to read, so you may be better off using the uncondensed version at a smaller size—just pick a type with lowercase letters with a larger x-height. And don't condense an already condensed typeface—really tough to read! The text DEER CUTTER in both ads was done in uppercase, but **Ad A** uses a wider typeface, while a solid sans serif type in **Ad B** allows for a more dominant heading.

"TOP CASH FOR YOUR HIDES" was moved to the top of the ad as sort of an intro to the text. While the type size is consistent, there needs to be a little more planning on what's important. The text seems to just float around the artwork. Sometimes you need to "package" the info. "Gun season only" is important, but can be a different size (smaller) than the meat packing info (see how it's handled in **Ad B**).

B

TOP CASH FOR YOUR HIDES

DEERCUTTER

Cut while you wait
"Appointment" until 4pm

\$49

SKINNING · CUTTING
YOU TAKE CUTS & TRIMS HOME
GUN SEASON ONLY
PLEASE BRING A COOLER

ALL CUTS ARE BONELESS & ALL DEER KEPT SEPARATE

\$20 CARPING

40¢ DOUBLE GRINDING
LB. VENISON

We work with Burt's Taxidermy 222-555-4321



Will Lange

555-5555

Wildcat Rd. 3/4 mile W of Cty E
(3 miles north of Hustisford)
5555 Wildcat Rd. watch for signs

Hrs: Nov. 23-Dec. 2 · 7am-6pm Nov 27 · 7am-10am

The hours should be placed near the contact information—keep like information together—that's the proximity part. It seems as if the dates and times are just used to fill the space in **Ad A**, when this information is better off near the map and address.

The way the customer's name and phone number are set up in **Ad B** is also easy to read and then the address and hours follow, so that there is a "route" for the reader to follow. There's no need to search for the information in the body of the ad, or to the side, or wherever there happened to be room. Let the text and information flow in a logical manner.

The map was also defined and simplified and the indicator for "north" was changed to the letter "N" and an arrow, rather than the

Papers turn attention to growth

Many newspapers have shifted from worrying to planning growth

By Kevin Slimp

Upon returning to my office following a 2,700-mile journey (Bellingham, Washington, happens to be the furthest city in the contiguous 48 U.S. states from my home in Knoxville, Tennessee) this morning, I have three things on my mind. And I'm unsure which of the three I should write about in this column. I often tell my clients that people like subheads in stories, so I think I'll cover all three topics with subheads meant to entice my readers.

Grants for Newspapers

I continue to hear from clients to share good news concerning their grant applications. Many of the newspapers I visit on-site have received grants – most often from their state Small Business Administration office – that allow them to retain training for their staff, among other things. Other grants are available from granting organizations that are not related to the government. I am convinced that if more newspapers knew there were grants for the taking, they would take advantage of these opportunities.

Most of my clients who have successfully followed this advice have received grants in the \$20-25,000 range. The smallest (I remember) was \$5,000, and the largest was \$100,000.

You don't have to hire anyone to apply for a grant. At the risk of violating Nike's trademark slogan, just do it. I advise contacting your county or state Small Business Administration office and asking about grants for small business staff training. Afterward, contact me if you want assistance completing the grant application process.



This focus group in Bellingham, Washington, examines newspapers popular among young readers in Tennessee, Florida and New York to determine what their newspaper might learn from each of these papers.

Focus Groups

Most of my hours in October and November have been reserved for working with newspaper focus groups. I can't overemphasize the good that can be accomplished by hosting newspaper focus groups.

One of the first questions I get when talking with publishers about upcoming focus groups is, "How will we get enough people to volunteer to be a part of the group?" In the ten years I've worked with focus groups, that's never been an issue. Last week in Washington, 25 focus group participants were selected out of the larger group that requested to be part of the opportunity. In South Carolina, where I'll be next week, I understand hundreds have expressed an interest in being part of a focus group.

Whether you host focus groups on your own or get someone to plan them for you, focus groups are the best method I know of to determine where your newspaper should be headed.

Who's Who in Publishing

See how a subhead can draw your attention? Research indicates readers are much more likely to read a long story if it contains subheads to break up the information. As I'm apt to do, I digress.

The third topic on my mind this morning involves my email inbox. When I opened my email, I immediately noticed the inbox was filled with messages from some of the most respected publishers in the newspaper business. If I had seen these names listed in a column, I would probably think it was the "Who's Who in American Newspapers."

The most requested topic of conversation involved discussing methods to increase readership (and revenue) in their papers. It pleases me to no end to hear publishers interested in growing their newspapers. It doesn't seem that long ago that many publishers were convinced they might not have a product in the future. In 2008, a respected leader in the journalism academic world told me he was convinced

there wouldn't be a single printed newspaper available in the United States by 2018. He asked my opinion. I told him it might have been the "dumbest thing I'd ever heard."

He seemed a bit dumbfounded and asked why I felt that way.

"Because," I answered, "if there's not one, I will start one and make a fortune. So, there will be at least one."

He disagreed. He thought I was naïve to think there would still be newspapers in ten years. I'm so glad he was wrong. I'm still waiting for someone to create a tee shirt that says "Kevin was right!" on the back.

I'm nearing my 800-word limit. One column, three topics. Like most newspapers, I always try to give readers their money's worth.



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.

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By
Mark W.
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YOU'D BETTER SHOP AROUND:
Should we all be
THANKFUL for these
new holiday foods?

Press the button, and Thanksgiving Dinner just got a whole lot easier!

New DUPONT Aerosol STUFFING

**NO chopping!
NO cubing!
NO hassles!**

The first Stuffing in a Can!

NO MUSS, NO FUSS... Through the wonders of modern science comes the handiest, easiest-to-use way to make delicious stuffing for Thanksgiving or any holiday festivity. Gone are the days of labor intensive stuffing preparation. At last the backbreaking chore of stuffing is done in minutes with just three easy steps...

STEP 1 Attach the patented 6, 8, or 12 inch stuffing dispensing probe.

STEP 2 Insert dispensing probe into turkey cavity. (TO BE USED ON POULTRY ONLY)

STEP 3 With the touch of your finger fill the cavity with aerosol stuffing.

DUPONT Aerosol Stuffing

Tell your grocer you want stuffing in the can

DW 2006

now...let the party begin!

the original pure Potato condiment!

Nalley's mild POTATO SAUCE
Norgold Russet

Nalley's POTATO SAUCE

The fun will just be starting when you serve up sizzling steaks smothered in Nalley's™ Potato Sauce. Blended from the finest Idaho potatoes, spring water and just a pinch of spices, Nalley's™ any dish. Use in place of catsup, cheese or lard to add a new twist to your meats, salads and vegetables. Available in nine mild flavors your family will love!

Nalley's
Nalley's is Adequate!

NALLEY'S IS: TONGUE AND SPORKS. WASHINGTON, PORTLAND, OREGON AND BELLEVILLE, MISSOURI

DIPLOD RUSSET • GARLIC • BLEU CHEESE • CLAM • SOUR BUTTER • CAT RADISH • DILL POTATO • OLIVE PIMENTO • SAVORY YAM

Check out these two products being offered for this Thanksgiving 2024 holiday. They're both new twists on familiar traditional foods. **DuPont Aerosol Stuffing** is faster and simpler to use than the usual kind, and wouldn't your turkey or a juicy steak taste even better with **Nalley's Potato Sauce**?

To tell you the truth, both of these are imaginary products — coming from the mind of a guy named **Cris Shapan**. In our advertising world, maybe the last things we need are fake ads, and yet these are fun... and I hope they make you laugh. That's what Cris

Shapan's stuff is all about.

He has amazing skills in creating realistic ad messages, and it's all fake. His bizarre, often non-sensical products almost seem possible. They're sometimes a little naughty, but they're always clever and funny.

AS IF WE don't have enough problems creating ads that truly work for our customers, here's a guy who makes up ads — and they usually look authentic.

May your Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa and New Year season be joyful for you and all your special people... and may it all be REAL!



Ad-Libs

BY JOHN FOUST

Two Things That Will Never Change

Luke told me about a business panel discussion in which he participated. He represented the ad department of the local newspaper, and others represented industries like banking, accounting, and various office services.

The moderator asked each panelist to introduce themselves, identify their company and position, then give a brief, one or two sentence statement of one thing they would like the audience to know about their specialty.

The brevity requirement was broken immediately. The accountant's statement was several minutes long and, according to Luke, completely forgettable. The banker rambled for a minute or two and ended up saying how much she liked her job. The other panelists were equally vague and unmemorable, until it was Luke's turn. After introducing himself, he said, "People don't buy features, they buy benefits."

That was it: People don't buy features, they buy benefits. In one sentence, he summed up the most important thing that a salesperson needs to know – whether it's selling through advertising or selling in a one-to-one conversation.

Luke's strategy was right on target. "My kickoff statement was easy to remember," he said. "Some of the people in the audience had never considered the concept of seeing products in terms of features and benefits. As the meeting progressed, their interest gave me a chance to cover important details about advertising. Some of them even wanted to set appointments."

His experience reminds me of the story about the old sea captain who was famous for his years of success in always delivering the ship's cargoes on time. In the face of countless storms and dangerous high seas, he never lost a ship, a crew member or a passenger.

Every morning, the old captain went through a strange ritual. He opened the safe in his quarters, opened an envelope and pulled out a small piece of paper. After staring at the paper for a few minutes, he locked it up again and went about the day.

When he retired, the first mate said, "Captain, we feel the secret to your success is on the piece of paper in your safe. May we see it?" The captain smiled and handed the key to him. A few minutes later, the first mate opened the envelope in front of the entire crew.

They were stunned when they learned that the paper read, "Port left. Starboard right."

The old captain's focus was on the most basic of sailing basics. From a canoe to a battleship, port is always the left side and starboard is the right side. That will never change.

In advertising – as in any kind of selling – people don't buy product features, they buy what those products can do for them. That's the most basic of advertising basics. And that, too, will never change.

As long as advertising people remember that in every sales presentation – and as long as they remember that in every ad they create – they'll stay on course.



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How To Sell Almost Anything To Anyone At Almost Any Price

*Media Sales Coach
Ryan Dohrn*

In sales, the secret to success lies in mastering a few key strategies. Over my 30 years in the industry, I've come to realize that if you follow three essential steps, you can sell just about anything to almost anybody at almost any price. These principles apply whether you're selling advertising, software, or services.

STEP 1:

Transfer Trust from You to Your Clients

Trust has always been a cornerstone of sales, but in 2024, it's taken on a new twist. People no longer feel a deep need to have a personal relationship with you before they buy from you. This does not mean that relationship selling is dead. It just means that the relationship has shifted a little bit. The trust has shifted a little bit. Prospects place a lower amount of trust/value on you personally as a salesperson. Instead, they tend to trust what other clients say about you and your product more. The key is to transfer the trust from you to your satisfied clients. Mentioning existing clients and their success stories builds credibility. For example, you might say, "We've been working with Company A, Company B, and Company C, and they're loving the results."

This approach is particularly relevant in my ad sales training classes, where demonstrating the success of previous marketing efforts can make a big impact. Just remember, it's crucial to remain ethical and above board when sharing client information. If you're working with happy customers, make sure your prospects know about it.

STEP 2:

Prove You're Relevant

Being relevant means doing your homework before a meeting. In today's world, you



must show up informed. Whether you're referencing something from LinkedIn or from their business social page you've seen online, it's important to demonstrate that you understand the prospect's world and you are not a generic seller.

In ad sales training, relevance is key to standing out from the competition. You need to ask insightful questions like, "If you could wave a magic wand, what would you like to see happen from our partnership?" By showing up prepared and offering relevant solutions, you not only demonstrate your expertise but also set yourself apart as someone who truly cares about the prospect's needs.

STEP 3:

Offer Pricing That Feels Safe

The final piece of the puzzle is offering

pricing that feels safe. Think of the Goldilocks principle: not too high, not too low, but just right. You don't want to scare people off with prices that seem risky, but you also don't want to undercut your value. Offering three pricing options—a lower one, a higher one, and a "just right" middle option—gives prospects a sense of security.

In ad sales training, this principle can be a game-changer. By offering multiple price points, you allow the buyer to make a decision they feel comfortable with. Often, they'll opt for that middle, "just right" choice, increasing your chances of closing the deal without feeling like you left money on the table.

To recap, here are the three steps to help you sell almost anything to almost anybody at almost any price:

- 1. Transfer trust – Shift trust from yourself to your satisfied clients by sharing their success stories.*
- 2. Prove relevance – Do your research and show up informed, demonstrating that you understand your prospect's needs.*
- 3. Offer safe pricing – Provide three pricing options that create a sense of safety and comfort, guiding buyers toward the middle choice.*

Whether you're involved in media sales or any other type of sales, these steps can significantly boost your chances of closing deals and building long-term client relationships. Focus on trust, relevance, and safe pricing, and watch your success rate soar. Never forget... If sales was easy, everyone would be doing it. But, they are not. We are the chosen few that have decided to harness the power of sales to feed our families for a lifetime.

Ryan Dohrn is the host of the #1 iTunes advertising sales podcast Ad Sales Nation and has trained over 6,000 media sales people in 7 countries. His 25-year media career spans consumer, B2B, traditional, and digital media brands from Disney to PennWell. He is also the Founder of Brain Swell Media, an international sales motivational keynote speaker, an Emmy Award winner, best-selling book author, and he still sells media today. Learn more online at <http://360AdSales.com> or <http://RyanDohrn.com>

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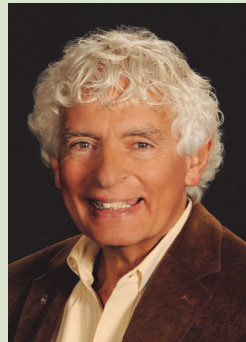
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