

June **2025** **INFORMER**



**Community
Papers of
Michigan**



Updates and Some July Promotions to Ponder

From The Executive Director, Don Rush



Happy half-way-through-the-year mark! I hope the year has been good to all of you and that you're well on your way to meeting all your goals. Before we get to some ideas for July promotions, here are some Community Papers of Michigan updates.

INCREASES IN REVENUE GOING BACK TO MEMBERSHIP

So, I ran the numbers last week for the Board of Directors' May Month End report and also did some year-to-date digging. I'm pleased to share with you that CPM's staff of one point five people (Dana Risner and myself), through sales of pre-print inserts and run of press display ads, has returned to membership \$82,136.13 for the year (January through May). That is an 8.5 percent increase of the same time period last year (\$75,694.38). That is very promising. It also shows the need for membership to send in correct circulation numbers and up-to-date rate cards. CPM's cut/commission on sales is 15 percent on ROP ads and 10 percent on pre-print inserts.

LOOKING FOR BOARD MEMBERS

If you ever wondered what goes on behind the scenes at Community Papers of Michigan, why not volunteer to be a board member? Get involved! CPM

needs a couple of publishers or general managers to join our board of directors. It isn't that hard of a commitment: four meetings a year, which last about 2 hours each. That's it. In return board members receive a mileage check and more importantly the opportunity to discuss issues with other board members and share ideas. The idea exchange at these meetings is enjoyed by all involved. Drop me a line, DonRush@CPapersMi.com and I will answer all your questions.

SOME JULY PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Yup, there's still time to make things happen for some quick revenue next month. Community papers usually have the ability to make quick turns or changes with their promotions over the daily conglomerate publications. Without further eloquence, here are some potential newspaper advertising promotions and themes for July 2025:

GENERAL PROMOTIONS & IDEAS:

- Focus on July Holidays: Tie your advertising to events like the 4th of July, Independence Day, or even less conventional holidays like World Emoji Day (July 17) or International Joke Day (July 1). On your social media, ask folks to send in their favorite, family friendly, emoji or dad joke. Run them on a page

with local sponsor(s). Good way to get community member names in your print editions.

- Summer Sales & Deals: Promote summertime products, services, or events with feature pages. Think about summer travel, outdoor activities, or seasonal products.

- Back-to-School Focus: Since back-to-school shopping often begins in July, consider advertising relevant products or services. Great time for a special section.

- Sustainable Practices: Consider highlighting environmentally conscious products or services in your community. Could be a nice section or feature pages in your publications.

- Support Local Charities: Tie your promotions to a charity drive or donate a portion of sales to a relevant cause.

WRAPPING UP

As always, please share your ideas for your feature pages, special promotions and sections. The more positive news we gather and share the easier we make it for all member publications to continue serving their communities and making a profit. Have a great summer!



BY JOHN FOUST

Ad-Libs

BRAND LOYALTY IS A POWERFUL FORCE

My grandmother Martha lived in Wilson, which is in eastern North Carolina. As a widow, she remarried later in life to a widower named Herman. I was in my twenties then, and it was a special privilege to see those sweet lovebirds spend their final years together.

A few years after they married, they moved to a retirement community in Durham, about thirty minutes away from Raleigh, where I was living.

Being so close, I visited them as often as I could. I remember calling before one visit to ask if there was anything they needed. Herman said he needed a can of Barbasol shaving cream from a particular drug store in Wilson. I was happy to do that and, although I mentioned that Barbasol was sold everywhere, he insisted that it had to come from that favorite drugstore. I ended up buying the shaving cream in Raleigh and took it to him, never letting on that it came from a different store. Everything worked out fine.

Brand loyalty is a powerful force. For years, Herman was loyal to Barbasol shaving cream and that drug store. He wasn't unpleasant about it at all; that was simply his choice. Like Herman, we all have loyalties to specific brands. Some of us wouldn't think of driving anything but a Toyota. Some

always have Cheerios in their kitchen cabinet. And others will drive past two grocery stores to get to the store they like best.



Branding is a big topic that has inspired countless books, articles, seminars and lectures. But for our purposes today, let's narrow it down to one question: How can you deal with an advertiser who doesn't consider your newspaper, because of a strong loyalty to another advertising choice?

Franklin, who has been a sales

manager for many years, told me about his team's approach. "We acknowledge that loyalty runs deep in the advertising industry. We have plenty of advertisers who are loyal to us, so we understand how some people are loyal to others. Maybe a business has had good results running ads somewhere else. Maybe they have a long-term relationship with the other ad department. Or maybe it's a comfortable habit or a resistance to the perceived difficulty of setting a new course.

"When we hit that brick wall with a potential advertiser, we do two things," Franklin explained. "First, we develop a plan to stay in touch. We don't become a pest, we just reach out to them every now and then to keep ourselves top-of-mind. We might send information about a relevant special section or even an interesting article about their favorite team.

"The second thing is to watch carefully for signs of change in their business, because change may indicate a willingness to consider new ideas. Is there new ownership or management? Is there a new ad manager? Are they planning to open a new home office or store location? Big or small, a hint of change may open the door for a sales appointment."

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Improving The Front Page

Making a few improvements will draw readers

By Kevin Slimp

I've had such a great time visiting publishers, editors, designers, and ad reps at conventions over the past few months. At most conventions, I've sat at tables pulled together to accommodate 20 or more publishers and editors as I critiqued their newspapers.

My most recent stop was at the North Dakota Newspaper Association Convention. Having spoken for this group many times in the past, I dutifully planned my trip to Bismarck, only to learn I was heading to the wrong city. One rental car and three hours later, I was in Fargo – in plenty of time for the convention.

I was especially impressed by one young man who had bought his local newspaper when he heard it was about to close. With a full-time job requiring a lot of travel, he assembled the necessary support to publish the weekly paper. As if that weren't enough, he also published a neighboring paper for a few weeks when the publisher there became too ill to work. His dedication is inspiring, and his newspaper is filled with local stories that read like those of a seasoned veteran. We spent some time after the convention sessions discussing possible improvements.

I'm looking forward to seeing his redesigned pages soon.

Since returning from Fargo two weeks ago, I've received several

front pages from publishers who wanted me to see what they had done following my critique. It amazes me to see the improvement in these papers after such a short time together. Just yesterday, I opened my inbox to find the front page of The Walsh County Record. Jackie Thompson, publisher, reminded me I had visited their newspaper more than 20 years ago in Grafton, North Dakota. I felt like a proud parent after seeing her new front page.

Here are a few of the changes she had made to the page:

- The Walsh County Record now has a brand-new flag across the top of the front page. This is one critique I have of the new design. It's much better than the previous flag, but I would find a way to spread out the letters in "RECORD" or possibly use "COUNTY RECORD" with "The Walsh County" above.
- Still, it's so much better than the old flag.
- I like the way the newspaper uses teasers above the top of the front page. They are designed in such a way that they grab attention and make the reader want to go to pages A4 and B1 to read the stories. I also appreciate that the baseball pitcher is facing toward the middle of the page, not off the page.
- There is a consistency to the page that draws the reader in. The fonts used for the

headlines are visually appealing. I tend to use the same font, a serif, for headlines, but it's perfectly acceptable to have one serif and one sans serif.

- The body font is large enough. I'm surprised how often newspapers use body text that is too small. People won't read small body text. They might read a paragraph or two, but not more. I advise clients to shorten stories to make room for larger text if necessary.
- The bylines and subheads stand out and draw the readers to the stories. I tend to prefer light sans serif fonts for bylines, but Jackie has found a way to make these work.
- The rules between packages make it more likely readers will read a story rather than be overwhelmed by text.
- The page is balanced. Sure, there are always things I might do differently. A line across the bottom of the page would help create a more balanced look, but the design is already very balanced; people in the photos are facing the right direction, and there's no fear that the page will tilt in one direction or another.
- The red kickers are effective. I'd probably not use more than two on a page, but this is the first issue of the new design. Things like that will work out in time.

This was one of several front pages I've received from publishers in North Dakota over



COMMUNITY

Spokane Region 4 victory in World Series tournament A4

SPORTS

Spokane Region 4 victory in World Series tournament B1

THE WALSH COUNTY

RECORD

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4, 2025 | SINCE 1880

School funds are declining

Federal funding appears to be waning

GRAFTON—The Grafton School District is facing a significant challenge as federal funding for its schools continues to decline. The district's superintendent, David H. Smith, says the loss of federal money is a major concern for the future of the district's education system.

Smith says the district is currently receiving about 10 percent of its federal funding, down from 20 percent just a few years ago. This loss of funding is forcing the district to make difficult choices about what programs to cut and what to keep.

The district is currently looking for ways to make up the lost funding, but Smith says that is a difficult task. "We're in a bind," he says. "We have to make sure we're providing the best possible education for our students, even if it means making some tough choices."

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Voters reject jail

Walsh County voters reject jail

WALSH COUNTY—Walsh County voters have rejected a proposal to build a new jail in the county. The proposal, which was put forward by the Walsh County Board of Commissioners, was defeated by a large margin in a recent election.

The proposal was for a new jail that would cost about \$10 million to build. The county board had been considering the proposal for several months, but voters clearly did not want to see a new jail built in the county.

The county board will now have to find another way to deal with the county's jail needs. The current jail is overcrowded and in need of major repairs. The county board is currently looking for ways to make up the lost funding, but Smith says that is a difficult task.

Council discusses housing development options

City rejects water tower bids

GRAFTON—The Grafton City Council is currently discussing several options for housing development in the city. The council is looking for ways to increase the city's housing stock and attract new residents to the area.

The council is currently looking at several options, including building new houses, converting old buildings into housing, and building new apartment complexes. The council is also looking at ways to make the city more attractive to new residents, such as improving the city's infrastructure and creating more parks and recreational areas.

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Bridge work continues

Contractors bids getting more competitive

WALSH COUNTY—The Walsh County Highway Department is currently working on a major bridge project in the county. The project involves replacing the old bridge over the North Fork of the Snake River with a new, larger bridge.

The project is currently in the bidding stage, and the county is receiving several bids from contractors. The county is looking for a contractor that can complete the project on time and within budget.

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the past two weeks. All were significant improvements over the previous designs. I can always find something I'd do differently (I wouldn't have used the bus artwork on this page), but these suggestions are sometimes a matter of personal preference.

While looking over newspapers spread out over the registration table at the Wyoming Press Association Convention in January, I commented that I'd never seen so many attractive front pages in one state before. I loved the person's response at the table. "It's because

you were here last year and showed everyone how to improve their newspapers. Everyone went home and redesigned their papers."

Yes, I'm a proud parent.



Kevin Slimp
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Kevin Slimp is a popular consultant, advisor and trainer in the newspaper industry.



By
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YOU'D BETTER SHOP AROUND: **A tale of two businesses:** **THEIR SALES GOALS ARE** **EXACTLY OPPOSITE EACH OTHER**

What makes marketing and advertising today so difficult, and often so contradictory?

FIRST EXAMPLE: Everyone in America knows what **FORD** or **GENERAL MOTORS** produce. We watch for updates, new styles and safety improvements these U.S. companies make each year in the millions of automobiles and trucks they design, create and sell each year. We apparently **WANT** and actually **EXPECT** product changes regularly, which are then advertised and promoted.

SECOND EXAMPLE: Now, realize that the leaders at the **J.M. SMUCKER CO.** approach each new year totally differently. This well-known creator of jams, jellies, peanut butter and other treats **THRIVES** on "sameness." We customers expect our favorite Smucker's products to taste exactly the same this year as they did last year... plus taste as they did back when we all were children.

We as marketers need to realize that the type of new-product advertising sought by one customer might be the exact opposite of what another might expect. We've got to offer messages for both: knowing who we are dealing with, and what they want their story to be.

So, I asked an Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) program to write this explanation, below:



Giving the consumers just what they want



While automotive giants like Ford and General Motors annually unveil models featuring enhancements in technology and safety, a contrasting trend unfolds within the food industry, exemplified by companies like Smucker's.

This difference in product development strategies stems primarily from the distinct ways consumer preferences influence each market.

IN THE AUTOMOTIVE SECTOR, consumer demand often centers around innovation and advancements. Buyers anticipate new features, improved performance, and cutting-edge technology with each model year.

Automakers respond by implementing regular updates, from minor facelifts to complete redesigns every five to seven years, to capture and retain customer interest and drive sales. This is essential for maintaining market competitiveness and addressing ever-evolving consumer expectations.

IN THE FOOD INDUSTRY, HOWEVER, established brands like Smucker's prioritize consistency and familiarity.

Consumer acceptance of food products is highly influenced by sensory properties like taste and texture, and these perceptions are built over time through repeated exposure. Sudden or significant changes to a beloved product can be met with consumer resistance and distrust.

Therefore, brands like Smucker's focus on maintaining the familiar sensory experience and rely on their established reputation and consumer loyalty rather than drastic annual product overhauls.

THIS DIFFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS the powerful role consumer preferences play in shaping product development across various industries, dictating whether innovation or unwavering consistency becomes the driving force behind a brand's strategy.

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 finally retired but still does some social media work from Fenton, Mich. MarkWRummel@gmail.com



Ryan Dohrn
Media Sales Coach

The “One Up, One Down” Sales Strategy: *How to Never Get Left Behind*



In media sales, losing your main contact at a client company can leave you scrambling. One day, you're exchanging friendly emails with Bob, your go-to guy, and the next, he's gone. Whether it's retirement, a new job, or just an extended leave, the result is the same: you're stuck, relationshipless, and at risk of losing business. That's why I rely on what I call the “One Up, One Down” strategy—a simple, proactive way to ensure you're never left out in the cold when change hits.

Pay Attention to the People Around Your Contact

Great ad sales training teaches you that relationships matter—but it's not just about your main relationship. Take a look around Bob. Who's Bob's boss? Who supports him? You might see names like Julie (above Bob) and Brandon (below him) copied on emails or attending Zoom meetings. The goal? Get to know them all. It's not about selling to everyone—it's about creating a web of connection that keeps you anchored in that company no matter what happens to Bob.

Build Relationships Beyond the Obvious

Whether you're at a trade show, on a Zoom call, or just replying to an email, don't zero in on your primary contact. Take the time to greet others, ask for introductions, and note who's who. During Zooms, jot down full names, roles, and even casual observations.

Use events as a chance to build those “above” and “below” relationships organically. You're not stalking—you're strategically networking.

Tap Into the Sales Team Fraternity

If you can't connect with people above or below your main contact, go sideways—connect with the company's sales team. Salespeople tend to help each other out. It's a unique kind of camaraderie, especially when you've walked the same path. Fellow sellers are often more than willing to introduce you around or give you inside insights that open doors.

Protect Your Pipeline from Disruption

Losing your key contact shouldn't mean losing your revenue. By proactively engaging with the layers around your client, you keep your pipeline protected. Your ad sales training isn't just about closing—it's about sustaining. When

change comes (and it will), you'll already have your next step mapped out.

Key Takeaways:

- Always identify and engage with the person above and below your main contact.
- Use Zooms, emails, and events to spot and build those relationships naturally.
- When in doubt, build rapport with the sales team—they'll often help their own.
- Stay ready for client turnover by building a multi-contact strategy.

Sales success doesn't come from luck—it comes from thinking ahead. So get strategic, build your safety net, and never get left behind again. Never forget... If sales was an easy job, everyone would be doing it. They are not. We are the chosen few. Chosen to help. Chosen to do big things. Chosen to guide. Chosen to win. — Ryan Dohrn

Ryan Dohrn is the creator of the 360 Ad Sales Training system and is a globally recognized media revenue consultant. Ryan actively sells print, digital, broadcast, event sponsorships, exhibit space and radio.



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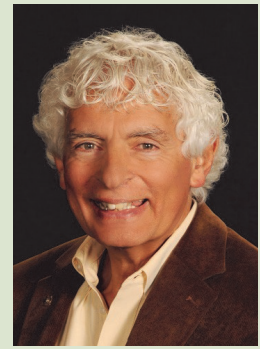
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