

July **2025**
INFORMER



**Community
Papers of
Michigan**



Wrapping Up Summer

Back-to-Class, and thinking of 2026

From The Executive Director, Don Rush

Don't know about you, but as soon as I enter July the inner Donnie Downer in me pessimistically whispers, "The summer is almost over. Bummer." Luckily for me, I once attended an Optimist meeting, so I look forward to the months to come.

For Community Paper publishers and managers, it is time to focus on wrapping up summer on a high note with special features and sections.

As summer wanes to **August** and **September** here are some thoughts for those **feature pages, special sections** and fun reader-engagement ideas.

What's happening during these months?

Well, many families are planning their last-minute vacations and starting to think about when they are going to button down their cottages, cabins and trailers. Where will they store their boats? Who will winterize their property? Sounds like a good idea for a section. So does . . .

. . . Last-minute back-to-school shopping for clothes, eye exams and school supplies.

August is great for Dog Days of Summer, or End of Summer Sales, with "cool" savings sections.

A sponsored August feature page could include community activities/events/fairs/festivals.

August 6 is **Farmworker Appreciation Day**; August 8 is **International Beer Day**; August 13 is **International Left-handers Day**. (Highlight notable lefties in your community. Have fun with it. Ask readers on your social media pages for their favorite lefties; ask your reporters on the streets the same question because they probably know mayors, council members, township employees, etc., who are left-handed.) Also, August 21 is **National Senior Citizens Day** – do something for the senior centers in your community . . . sponsors, diners and any other place who offers senior discounts.

August is also a good time to subtly introduce fall-related content, like pumpkin spice recipes or autumn fashion trends.

And finally, the end of August is a GREAT way to promote high school athletes in your communities. Parents love this stuff. Lots of pictures of the **fall sports** teams, marching bands, dance and cheer teams, too. No one does this, but why not do a feature on the person(s) who don all those hot, stinky mascot uniforms who roam the sidelines? (I know those outfits are hot, because I did it in high school a few times during basketball season. Uggh. Go Wolves!).

Moving forward to 2026 . . .

I know it seems early, however now is a good time to start planning your 2026 calendar. What has worked, what hasn't? Wanna try something different and new? Now is a good time to investigate before pulling the trigger. One thing you can consider doing is "up your game" in promoting your special feature pages and sections.

Each month, I am always impressed when I receive promotional emails from two member publishers and Directors on CPM's Board, George Moses (*The Marketeer*) and Jeff Demers (*C & G Newspapers*).

Both emails are colorful. Both promote their publications' reach – local homeowners and readers. George uses Constant Contact to "personalize" his personal message about an upcoming edition. He makes it more personal, by including a mugshot of himself and his contact information. Jeff's focuses on the benefits, costs and sales pitch of a specific special section. I did not include it with the graphic, but below the message is a list of almost 20 sales representatives for each community they cover.

Well done, gentlemen!

Have a great rest of July!

**IT'S SPRING!
AND IT'S TIME TO CULTIVATE THE
BLOSSOMING OF NEW CLIENTS WITH
YOUR AD IN THE MARKETEE'S
APRIL EDITION**



Hi Don,
Greet the arrival of spring with an ad that will make your business blossom as our world turns green! Reach your customers where they live; in the 76,000 local homes we mail to every month! You will get monster results!

Glossy deadline is Wednesday, March 12
Newsprint deadline is Monday, March 17

This is a great time to get your message into up to 76,000 local homes on Saturday, March 29.
Call us today and let's do business!

George Moses
(810) 227-1575 ext. 107 or Cell: 517-404-7807
gmoses@georgemosco.com



Does your publication design and send out such promotions? Please add me to your email list to receive, DonRush@CPapersMI.com. Do you have any unique feature pages or special sections you love to publish? Please write me a note about them. Let's share and grow!

NEWSPAPERS Your Community. Your Business. Your News.

NEWSPAPERS Your Community. Your Business. Your News.

SPOTLIGHT ON

BUSINESS

July 9 - September 3, 2025

RECEIVE A FREE STORY OR DOUBLE YOUR SPACE

ASK YOUR REP ABOUT OUR DIGITAL UPGRADE WITH YOUR PRINT ADVERTISING! STARTING AT JUST \$75 FOR 30 DAYS!

HURRY! STORY DEADLINE IS TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO THE PUBLISHING DATE!

Does your business have a special story that makes it unique? Do you have employees, products or services that you would like to highlight? If you are a business - don't miss this advertising opportunity to spotlight yourself with a **FREE STORY!**

1/2-Page Space:
1/4-Page Story & 1/4-Page Ad or 1/2-Page Ad

Full-Page Space:
1/2-Page Story & 1/2-Page Ad or Full-Page Ad

delivers:

to more than **573,000** mailboxes!
to over **110,000** monthly web readers!
to more than **14,600** email subscribers!
to more than **79,000** social followers!

CONTACT YOUR AREA SALES REP BELOW

Think big, think small

5 things to grow and 5 things to trim down

By Kevin Slimp

A benefit of experience is understanding that you probably don't know nearly as much as you once thought you did. Something I love about leading focus groups is being surprised. Let's face it, not much is surprising anymore. With that in mind, I'd like to share ten findings related to size that often appear during newspaper focus groups.

5 things to grow:

Font sizes in headlines.

Bigger fonts are no more expensive than smaller fonts. Use a font that draws attention to the story.

Let's face it: we put much effort into increasing readership. One of the simplest ways I know to draw more readers to the page is by using bigger fonts in our headlines.

Top of the front page.

In my travels, I've heard this area called the masthead, nameplate, and all types of other names. I simply refer to it as "the flag." The area at the top of page one is crucial in getting potential readers to pick up the page.

Too many newspapers have tiny flags. Let's face it: this is prime real estate for advertising your newspaper. Draw readers to the page with a large flag.

Letters to the editor.

Readers love letters to the editor. Every

focus group asks for more of them. Try to recruit more readers to send in letters to the editor.

Space for kids.

Whether half a page or a whole section, areas designed for young readers are popular in newspapers; it's a win/win. Anything we can do to attract young families and readers is a plus. I've learned even older readers enjoy reading pages intended for young readers.

Body Text.

Let's face it, nobody likes reading text that's too small. I notice focus groups often say text is "alright," because they've become so used to small text. However, as soon as the redesigned version of their paper comes out, readers will praise the "easier to read text."

I once redesigned a newspaper in Kansas. A few weeks later, the publisher sent me an email from the local optometrist. He thanked her for the

larger text and noted that many of his clients thought their site was improving because reading the newspaper was so much easier.

5 things to trim

Line weight.

Thin is in, and we're talking about more than waistlines. Like many other areas, heavy is out when it comes to design. Never use frames heavier than .5 point. I tend to use .4 in redesigns.

Wordy headlines.

Wait. Didn't I just write to have bigger fonts in headlines? Yes, I did. Bigger fonts, fewer words. The headline draws the readers to a story. The subhead tells the story. Use as few words as possible in the headline, then let the subhead do the rest of the job. For example:

School board meets to examine budget, lowering amount set aside for extracurricular activities

School board meets to examine budget, lowering amount of funds set aside for extracurricular activities

By C. Ranston Snord, Reporter

In a decision that's already sending shockwaves through PTA meetings and locker rooms alike, the Lennox Valley School Board

realignment" and "core academic focus" as primary justifications. The move, passed quietly during a sparsely attended session, slashes support for everything from drama club to

chess team captain wondering how much a tournament bus really costs. As local taxpayers digest the implications, the board's gamble raises a familiar question in our tight-knit

School board cuts activities

Board meets to examine budget, lowering amount set aside for extracurricular activities

By C. Ranston Snord

Reporter

In a decision that's already sending shockwaves through PTA meetings and locker rooms alike, the Lennox Valley

School Board voted last night to significantly reduce funding for extracurricular programs, citing "budget realignment" and "core academic focus" as primary justifications. The move, passed quietly during a sparsely attended session, slashes

es support for everything from drama club to junior varsity sports, leaving parents fuming, students demoralized, and one bewildered chess team captain wondering how much a tournament bus really costs. As local taxpayers digest the

Tennessee. In most photos, the area outside the shoulder(s) is unnecessary.

Obviously, there are exceptions to every rule, but cropping out blurry trees, rooms, etc., makes it possible to enlarge the most interesting area of a photo.

Paragraph length.

Long paragraphs lead to suffering eyes among readers. Keep paragraphs to no longer than 4-6 sentences. Remember, the RETURN key is your friend.

I bet many of you have items you'd add to this list. I always stop when I reach my 800-word limit (it's a self-imposed limit, by the way). Send your suggestions to me at:

kevin@kevinslimp.com

and you might help me become even better at redesigning newspapers. I may not know as much as I once thought I did, but I'm always happy to learn more.



Kevin Slimp

"The News Guru"

kevin@kevinslimp.com

Kevin Slimp is a popular consultant, advisor and trainer in the newspaper industry. He currently serves as CEO of Market Square Publishing and Chief Guru at NewspaperAcademy.com.

Instead, let's use a headline/subhead combo:

School board cuts activities

Board meets to examine budget, lowering amount set aside for extracurricular activities

Length of stories.

A publisher in Tennessee told me about a study done by his paper. They sent readers copies of the paper, along with red pens. They were asked to circle everything they read in the paper. Not just the headlines, but everything.

What was learned? Most readers never get past two paragraphs. Very few readers are reading your long stories. Fewer words means more space for larger body text and white space.

Wasted space in photos.

Cropping is an art. I've been an adherent to the "shoulder rule" since learning about it from Ed Henninger in a class at The University of



Navigating Sales Success Amid Economic Uncertainty

Ryan Dohrn - Media Sales Coach



Great ad sales training teaches you In today's volatile economic landscape, sales professionals face unprecedented challenges. However, with the right strategies, it's possible to not only survive but thrive.

Get Ahead of the Storm - Economic uncertainty often leads to hesitation among clients. To counter this, proactively engage with your clients. Understand their concerns and provide them with relevant information. By staying ahead of the curve, you position yourself as a trusted advisor rather than a reactive salesperson.

Action Tip: Don't wait for clients to reach out—be proactive. A quick check-in or a thoughtful follow-up can go a long way in maintaining relationships and opening up new conversations. Remind them of your previous successes and show how your solutions have helped others weather tough times.

Sell Value, Not Just Product - In challenging times, clients are more focused on value than ever before. Shift your approach from selling products to selling solutions that address your clients' immediate needs. Demonstrate how your offerings can provide tangible benefits in the short term, helping clients navigate current challenges.

Action Tip: A key to long-term sales success is knowing the difference between the features of your product and the value it brings to your client. When you highlight the ROI of your product in concrete terms, clients feel confident in their investment, especially when times are uncertain.

Remember: People don't buy products—they buy outcomes. In uncertain times, outcomes are what they want most.

Step Up Your Activity - Increased activity leads to increased opportunities. During periods of uncertainty, intensify your outreach efforts. Engage with clients through various channels, share valuable content, and be present in their decision-making processes. Your heightened visibility can make a significant difference in securing deals.

Action Tip: Diversify your outreach methods. If you're primarily using email, try adding phone calls, LinkedIn outreach, or even video messages. The more channels you use, the more opportunities you create to engage and influence potential clients.

Bonus Tip: Have a strong follow-up plan in place. Often, it's the second or third interaction with a client that leads to the sale. Stay consistent, and don't be afraid to follow up until you hear back.

Focus on Building Trust - Trust is everything in sales, especially during uncertain times. Clients need to feel that you are genuinely looking out for their best interests, not just pushing a sale. Building trust is an ongoing process that requires transparency, integrity, and empathy.

Action Tip: Share relevant case studies and testimonials that highlight your track record. Let your clients see that others in their industry or similar situations have benefited from working with you.

Bonus Tip: Focus on long-term relationships, not just quick wins. In an era of skepticism, clients appreciate salespeople who focus on building a partnership instead of making a fast sale.

Overcoming Objections with Confidence - Objections are inevitable

in sales, especially when the economy is in flux. The key is to anticipate and handle objections confidently. From "We can't afford it right now" to "We're just not sure about making a commitment," be prepared with responses that position you as a problem-solver.

Action Tip: The best way to address price objections is to focus on the value you're offering. If a client says, "It's too expensive," respond with, "I understand that cost is a concern. What I want to make sure of is that you're getting the right solution for your needs, which will provide a strong return on investment in the long run."

Bonus Tip: The economy is often a convenient scapegoat for clients looking for an easy out. Counter this by turning the conversation toward opportunities. "I get it, the economy is tough right now. But now is actually the perfect time to double down on marketing and strategic investments. Here's why..."

While economic uncertainty presents challenges, it also offers opportunities for those who are prepared. By implementing these strategies, you can navigate the storm and emerge stronger. Success in sales is not about avoiding challenges, but about adapting, overcoming, and positioning yourself as a trusted partner in the process.

As you reflect on these strategies, remember that consistent activity, a focus on value, and building long-term relationships will keep you ahead of the game, no matter what the economy throws at you.

Never forget... If sales was easy, everyone would be doing it. – Your Sales Coach, Ryan

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.



BY JOHN FOUST

Ad-Libs

ADVERTISING LESSONS FROM A CAR WASH



Jerry used to be in the car wash business. One day he was feeling down when he got home after work. When his wife asked him what was wrong, he said, "There were five customers who complained today."

She asked, "How many cars did you wash today?"

He said, "Six hundred at that location and about eighteen hundred at the others."

She smiled at him and said, "Hush!"

Jerry told me that his wife's remark put the problem into perspective. His focus on the handful of complainers had kept him from thinking about the overwhelming number of happy customers that day. "Customer service has always been the most important thing to me and the team," he explained. "We want everybody to be happy, but I have to remind myself that people are people and not everyone is going to be happy every time. Every now and then, we'll miss a spot."

The numbers reveal that Jerry has an excellent record of customer service. Those five complainers represented just 1.25 percent of his customers at that location and an even smaller percentage of the total customers that day in all of his car washes. Jerry's big heart is one reason he built such a successful business. His wife

was reminding him to be grateful for the 99-plus percent who were happy.



There is a famous quote which is attributed to the poet John Lydgate and was later adapted by Abraham Lincoln: "You can please some of the people all of the time, you can please all of the people some of the time, but you can't please all of the people all of the time."

Perfection is a strange thing. On one hand, it drives us to create the best possible quality. But on the other

hand, it makes bad news (no matter how small) stand out from the good news (no matter how big). On some occasions, perfection keeps us up at night.

Jerry's story reminds me of Alicia, who has managed an ad team for many years. She once said, "We teach our team to strive for perfection, but also to accept that sometimes things get messed up."

"When mistakes happen, we do three things. First, we apologize and do everything we can to correct the problem, even if we discover it before the advertiser does. Staying ahead of the situation can keep it from getting worse."

"The second thing is to learn from the mistake. One of my favorite sayings is, 'There are two outcomes: successes and lessons.' The real tragedy of a mistake is when no one learns anything."

"The third thing is to celebrate the things that are going right. We deal with the blunder, then let it go and focus on the good. That's a big part of maintaining morale in the ad department, or in any department in the newspaper."

Alicia makes a great point. Dealing with mistakes is a little like a car wash. Below the dirt and grime, there's a nice shine.

(c) Copyright 2025 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



By
Mark W.
Rummel
Fenton, MI

MarkWRummel@gmail.com

YOU'D BETTER SHOP AROUND:

Are we **honest** at check-outs? **and** Do our items **really** get recycled?

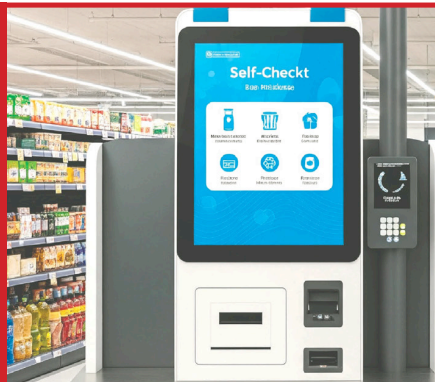
Here's something I've wondered about:

What percentage of U.S. adults admit to occasional dishonesty when scanning their own groceries?

SELF-CHECKOUT REALITY: While the convenience of self-checkout lanes is undeniable, a significant number of U.S. adults admit to dishonesty when scanning their own groceries. Recent reports indicate that about 15% of consumers confess to intentionally stealing at self-checkout kiosks.

This figure, based on surveys, suggests that for every 10 shoppers, at least one is purposely leaving without paying for all items. Moreover, a concerning 44% of those who admit to stealing plan to re-offend.

"Accidental" thefts also contribute to losses, with 21% of self-checkout thefts attributed to items not being scanned — and 61% of those "accidental" thieves choosing to keep the item anyway. Retailers face substantial losses, with self-checkout lanes experiencing a shrink rate up to 65% higher than traditional cashier lanes.



IMAGES
CREATED &
RESEARCH
ASSISTED
BY A.I.
BUT A
REAL LIVE
HUMAN
WROTE THIS

Here's something I've wondered about:

How many of the used items that Michigan residents put out for recycling actually get recycled and reused?

THROWING OUT 75% OF TRASH: Michigan officials are rightly proud that we've surpassed the 25% threshold in recycling household waste. The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) says that target was reached in 2024, up from the 2019 figure when we recycled just 14.3% of our trash. It's an upward trend.

However, recycling 25% of our trash also means that the other 75% is still being sent to landfills, EGLE admits. One good aspect of our recycling is that significant and growing amounts of cardboard and certain plastics ARE being recycled and reused.

Still, many of the folks who diligently sort plastics and papers for pickup by specialized recycling trucks often question — are these items truly recycled or do they just go to landfills with all other trash? We don't know for certain, but we can hope recycling does occur.

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



There are
28 MILLION
Small Businesses
in the US

Nearly
40%
still do NOT have
a website

**NOW is the
Perfect Time**
to Join Our Website
Reseller Program

- **SMB's Don't Want DIY**

Small businesses don't have the time or know-how to build a website themselves. They just want someone to build it for them.

- **SiteSwan is the Perfect Fit**

SiteSwan websites are affordable, beautifully designed, fully responsive, search engine friendly and only take minutes to build.

- **Complete Web Design Business-in-a-Box**

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**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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



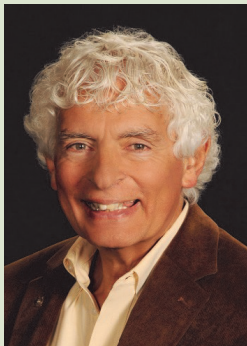
Cindy Gaedert-Gearhart
Vice President

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



Jeff Demers
Treasurer

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



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



Become a Board Member
Your Input Helps Us All!

Email Don Today!
donrush@cpapersmi.com



Don Rush, Executive Director
donrush@cpapersmi.com



Community
Papers of
Michigan

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



Dana Risner, Business Manager
danarisner@cpapersmi.com