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SEPTEMBER 2025



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COMING NEXT MONTH

The October issue of *Publish* will recap the events, people and awards from the ACP Annual Conference and Trade Show in addition to the current events and hot topics within our industry.



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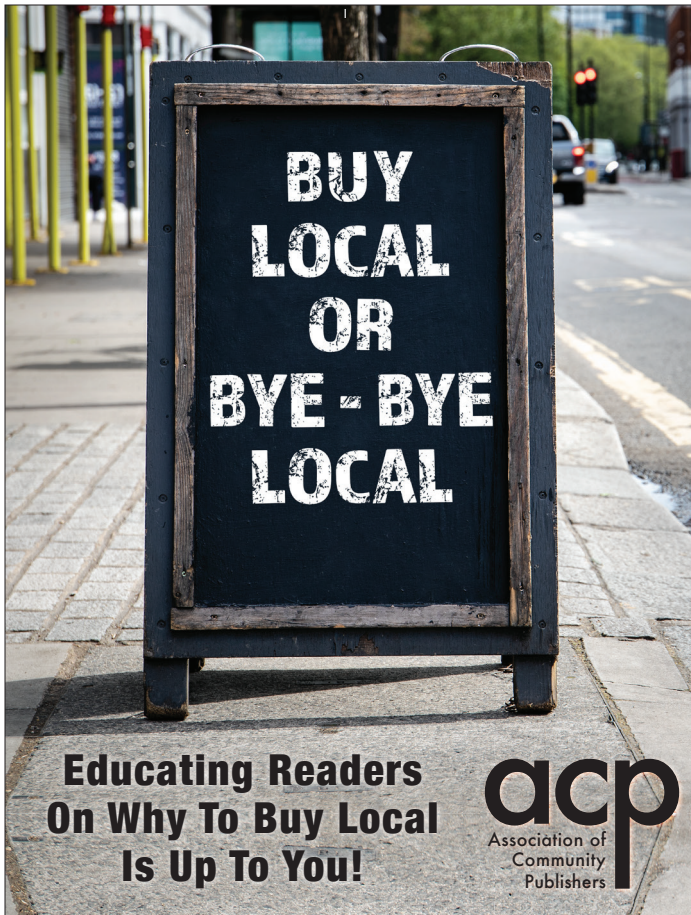


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2026 ACP BOARD OF DIRECTORS – AT-LARGE DIRECTOR NOMINEES

- ✓ **Jocelyn Engle** – Engle Printing & Publishing Co., Lancaster, PA
- ✓ **Scott Greene** – Reminder Publishing, East Longmeadow, MA
- ✓ **Carol Toomey** – Action Unlimited, Concord, MA
- ✓ **Michael VanStry** – Coastal View News, Carpinteria, CA

The above nominees are presented for the ACP Board of Director positions whose 2-year terms will commence on January 1, 2026. The official ballots will be sent via email to the designated contact person at each member publication on Wednesday, October 1, 2025 and must be returned by Wednesday, October 15, 2025. Election results will be announced no later than Monday, November 3, 2025 by email and in the November Publish.



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BY JOYCE FRERICKS –
ACP PRESIDENT

Life can be overwhelming sometimes with all the things we need to get done. When I take time to write down my to-do lists, I can focus better. My desk has an array of colorful Post-it notes on it with things that need to be done in the next few days. I also keep lots of lists. Lists for the week, month, year, projects, meetings, etc. I also make conference to-do lists.

Many years ago, when I started going to conferences, they overwhelmed me. Besides, the question of would anyone talk to me, was the task from my employer to get enough ideas at the conference to pay for the trip. I had to bring back a written report at every conference I went to.

The first free paper conference I went to was in 2014, and the idea I brought home has now grossed over \$237,000 in sales. We grossed enough from the first meeting to pay for many conferences and meeting for years to come.

I have three conference to do lists — before, during and after.

Before:

- Figure out deadlines and if anything can be done before I leave.
- Let others know I will be gone and reschedule meetings.
- Clean up as many emails as possible.

sible. This always makes me feel less stressed about being away.

- Go to the bank and get cash to bring along.
- Send family conference details – flight and hotel plans, etc.
- Pack – yep needs to be on my list so I don't do it the morning I leave.

During:

- Go for a walk every morning.
- Talk to five people I have never met before.
- Make a list of sessions to attend.
- Make a list of things that I learned and can bring back to implement at our paper.
- Try a new food or drink.
- **Network!** This might be the most important item on the list. At almost every conference I have been to, I go home learning as much, if not more, from the networking events and just sitting around chatting with other publishers. We are currently in the process of changing some software because of a conversation I had on the airplane on the way to the last ACP meeting.

After:

- Send an email to at least one person after conference.
- The after list is determined by the sessions you attend and the networking you did at the conference. Many years ago, I was at a conference and the to-do list was pages long. I asked someone sitting near me, who was also making a long list, how we could do everything. He gave me some advice that I still use. Determine which of the things are actually doable at your publication and then make a new doable list. Instead of trying to do everything at one time, make a time line. Not everything needs to be done the first week you get back. Some of it may be years out.

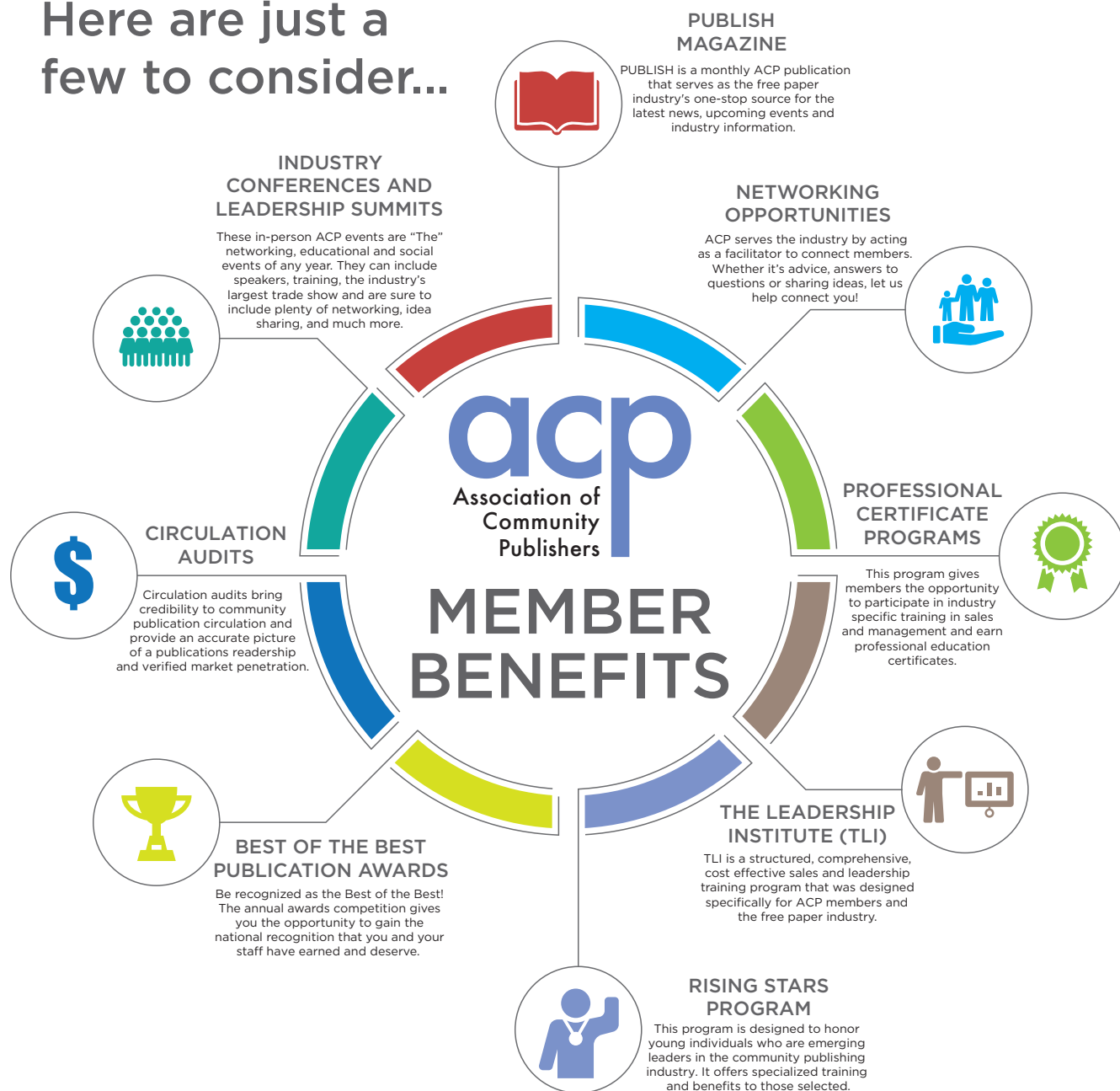
In today's world, we can learn almost anything online. ACP has a great array of learning videos on our website, but for me, the conference is always a better experience. The networking and camaraderie when you visit with real people is priceless. I can't wait to visit with all of you in Mobile, Alabama.

Now, I can cross off "ACP Column" on today's to-do list. ■



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Here are just a few to consider...



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WELCOME TO MOBILE!



BY CASSEY RECORE

Before we began planning this conference, I had never been to Mobile or even to Alabama! So when I first arrived, I wasn't quite sure what to expect. But I have to say, I was genuinely and pleasantly surprised. From the beautiful landscapes surrounding the city to the rich history and true Southern charm, Mobile made me feel welcomed and at ease and I hope it does the same for you.

Beyond the incredible location, I'm especially excited about the program we've put together this year. If you've had a chance to review the schedule, you might notice that we've mixed things up a bit. The biggest change? Our keynote speaker format. Instead of kicking off the event with a single keynote, we've spread three keynote sessions throughout the schedule. This new structure is designed to keep the energy and inspiration going strong from start to finish. I hope it resonates with you, and I look forward to hearing your feedback after the event.

I won't walk through the entire agenda here - if you're reading this

while attending the conference, you already have the full schedule in hand. And if you're not in Mobile with us, the details probably won't mean as much. What I will do is encourage you to take full advantage of every moment you're here. Dive into every session you can, attend a class you might not have considered before and embrace the opportunity for face-to-face time with colleagues, old and new. If the pandemic taught us anything, it's that nothing compares to a real, in-person connection.

For those who couldn't join us in person, remember that ACP offers year-round value through resources like our **On Demand Training Center**, monthly roundtable calls starting

“Dive into every session you can, attend a class you might not have considered before and embrace the opportunity for face-to-face time with colleagues, old and new.”

again this fall, and virtual training sessions throughout the year. And don't forget the **2026 Leadership Retreat** is coming up this February in Orlando, Florida. If you've never been, I highly recommend making it a priority!

The point is, your ACP membership comes with a wide range of opportunities to learn, grow, and connect. Make the most of them. Never stop expanding your knowl-

edge, growing your network, and investing in your personal and professional development. We all have something to learn from each other and that will never change.

Looking ahead, once we wrap up in Mobile and head into the fall, we'll begin planning for the 2026 Leadership Retreat in Orlando. I'll share more details as they become available. We're also holding an ACP Board Planning Session in conjunction with the retreat. And true to what I mentioned earlier, nothing beats the productivity and energy of being together in person. While virtual meetings serve us well, the momentum we build when we meet face to face is unmatched.

This fall, we'll also host our Annual Membership Meeting virtually, where members will vote on the slate of candidates for the 2026-2028 At-Large ACP Board of Directors. Be sure to keep an eye on Publish and our e-blasts for more information.

Finally, I want to highlight the continued growth of our organization. Since my last update, we've welcomed two new publishing members to the ACP family. A special welcome to **ETX Hometown Media** in Bullard, TX and **Prince William Living** in Manassas, VA — we're so glad to have you on board!

If you're here with us in Mobile, I hope you're enjoying every minute learning, discovering new ideas, connecting with peers, meeting potential new suppliers, and creating lasting memories. That's what this experience is all about. And if you couldn't make it this time, I hope you'll take advantage of the many virtual resources made available by ACP and make plans to join us at our next in-person event. I promise, it will be worth it.

See you soon — either online or, better yet, in person! ■

Again we ask you...

Are you taking full advantage of all your member benefits?

And here are even more to consider...



To get your publications on the growth track, call the ACP office about becoming a member today.

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THE CONFERENCE IS FINALLY HERE!



BY LOREN COLBURN

Can you believe it? Conference time is finally here – and let me tell you, if you had any idea how much work the conference team puts in behind the scenes, you'd probably wonder if we've all lost our minds a little. A whole year of prep, weekly calls, constant checklists, and a whole lot of coffee later... and somehow, we still love doing it. Because honestly? It's totally worth it.

When I think about what this conference feels like, it reminds me a lot of those high school or college reunions – the ones where you reconnect with people who were part of some of your favorite memories. Or maybe it's more like those family reunions where you catch up with cousins you used to run wild with. Either way, there's this amazing mix of familiarity, shared experience, and genuine connection that just makes being here feel right.

I've gotta say there's something really special about this industry. Not every professional community is like ours. The entrepreneurial grit, the can-do attitude, the "let's figure this out together" vibe – it's rare, and it's what makes coming together like this so powerful. Whether we're

swapping success stories, sharing what didn't work (so others can avoid the pain), or brainstorming over coffee, this is where real relationships and real learning happen.

Now, if you didn't make it to conference this year – ugh, we miss you! But seriously, you might not realize what you're missing out on. Maybe that idea-sharing session could've sparked a campaign to turn your slow January into a record month. Or that chat in the hallway might've introduced you to CRM software that completely changes how you track sales. Or maybe... you just missed meeting someone who could become your go-to call when you need a little help or inspiration.

But hey, don't worry. You've got another shot to be part of the magic: mark your calendar right now for the ACP Leadership Summit, happening February 2026 in sunny Orlando. Trust me, this is one event you'll want locked in early.

In the meantime, stay tuned each month to Publish and we'll keep

you in the loop on everything you need to know so you're ready to hit the ground running when we gather again.

And for those of you who are here – soak it all in. Every session, every conversation, every idea has the potential to shift the way you think or grow your business. Be curious, be bold, and most of all, **listen!** Your next big win might be sitting right across the room.

And Mobile? What a gem! This place brings all the Southern charm... amazing food, vibrant nightlife, and that warm Mardi Gras hospitality that just makes you feel welcome. It's the perfect backdrop for reconnecting, exploring, and celebrating this 75th Anniversary of the awesome industry trade association we're all a part of.

So here's to another unforgettable conference. Make the most of it, enjoy the people around you, and never forget: **Print's not dead... it's READ!** ■





CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY • SEPTEMBER 10

9:30 AM Registration Opens
 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM Mobile Sites Tour*
 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM Leadership Certificate Program*
 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM Rising Stars Orientation Meeting
 6:15 PM - 7:30 PM Welcome Reception
 Evening: Enjoy Mobile!

THURSDAY • SEPTEMBER 11

7:30 AM Registration Open
 7:45 - 8:45 AM Breakfast - Fork Full of Ideas!
 8:45 - 9:20 AM Welcome & Keynote with Guy Tasaka
 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM Coffee & Speed Networking
 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Recognition Lunch - Industry Awards
 1:00 PM - 2:10 PM Breakout Sessions:
Sales Track: TLI Classes (2 to choose from)
Leadership Track: Workshop with Guy Tasaka
Trade Show Open
 2:15 PM - 3:00 PM Coffee & Vendor Interaction Session
 2:15 PM - 3:15 PM Rising Stars Special Session
 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM Keynote with Ross Furukawa
 4:30 PM - 5:30 PM Idea Exchange Mardi Gras Style
 6:30 PM - 9:30 PM Mardi Gras Parade & Celebration*

FRIDAY • SEPTEMBER 12

7:30 AM Registration Open
 8:00 - 9:00 AM Breakfast
 8:00 - 9:00 AM January Spring Breakfast Roundtable
 9:00 AM - 10:10 AM Breakout Sessions:
Sales Track: TLI Class
Leadership Track: Workshop with Ross Furukawa
Trade Show Open
 10:10 AM - 11:00 AM Innovation Session
 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM Keynote with Liza & Jay Graves
 12:15 PM - 1:15 PM Lunch & TLI Graduation
 1:15 PM - 2:25 PM Breakout Sessions:
Sales Track: TLI Classes (2 to choose from)
Trade Show Open
 2:30 PM - 3:30 PM Trade Show Activity & Drawings
 3:30 PM Silent Auction Officially Closes
 3:30 PM - 4:40 PM Breakout Sessions:
Sales Track: TLI Class
Leadership Track: Workshop with Liza & Jay Graves
 4:45 PM - 5:30 PM Closing Presentations
 5:30 PM Rooftop Reception

This schedule is subject to change.

**Optional sessions/events at an additional cost.*

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



GUY TASAKA

Guy Tasaka

Guy Tasaka knows community publishing - and he's spent his career helping publishers like us stay strong, smart, and relevant as the media world keeps shifting under our feet. Based in Portland, Oregon, Guy brings over 30 years of hands-on experience in media technology, digital strategy, and revenue development.

Many of us have heard Guy present his "Media 3.0" framework, which he's shared with over 1,500 publishers across the country. His advice isn't just theory - it's grounded in the real-world challenges we all face, with a focus on growing digital without losing what makes our print products so essential to our communities.

As a regular contributor to Editor & Publisher magazine, Guy has helped lead the conversation around "Actionable AI" - breaking down how publishers can use emerging tech in ways that are actually doable (and profitable). These days, he's working one-on-one with publishers to roll out smarter digital strategies, including Customer Data Platforms (CDPs) and AI tools that support local sales and engagement.

Guy's been part of the digital evolution from the very beginning, and he brings that big-picture knowledge with a practical, no-nonsense approach. He gets what it means

to serve a local market - and how important it is to make every dollar and every decision count.

Lately, his focus has been helping publishers like us tap into more local ad revenue by combining the power of print with smart, data-driven digital tactics. He's all about helping community publishers play to their strengths while making the leap into what's next - with confidence and clarity.



ROSS FURUKAWA

Ross Furukawa

Ross Furukawa is a longtime media entrepreneur and digital strategist who understands the unique challenges - and opportunities - facing community publishers today.

With a deep background in both print and digital publishing, Ross has helped launch and grow everything from hyperlocal news platforms to creative studios and affiliate marketing networks. His passion lies in helping local media organizations modernize without losing what makes them special: their connection to the community.

Ross brings a hands-on, results-driven approach to digital transformation - leveraging smart tools like AI-powered marketing automation, multi-channel audience development, and integrated technology to generate leads, boost revenue, and build sustainable growth. He's a firm believer that with the right

strategy, community publishers can thrive in the digital era without sacrificing mission or identity.

Over the years, Ross has partnered with dozens of local media brands to reimagine how they reach readers, engage advertisers, and future-proof their operations - all while keeping their feet firmly planted in the communities they serve.



LIZA HEADSHOT



JAY GRAVES

Liza and Jay Graves, the Team Behind StyleBlueprint

Liza and Jay Graves are the duo driving StyleBlueprint - a digital media platform with a heart for Southern towns, culture, and small business. They're passionate about helping under-resourced communities grow tourism and local pride through smart, scalable co-op marketing that works.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Liza founded StyleBlueprint in 2009 with a mission to spotlight the voices, businesses, and travel gems that make the South so unique. Under her leadership, the platform has grown into a nationally recognized, woman-owned business known for both its editorial quality and strong workplace culture. She's been honored by Southern Living and the Nashville Business Journal for her influence in media and leadership.

Jay, the company's COO and president of EO Nashville, brings years of experience in tech, startups, and growth strategy – having worked with national brands like NBC Sports, the NFL, and several major universities. After leading two companies through acquisition, he's now focused on helping StyleBlueprint's community partners use data-driven tools to amplify their local stories.

Together, Liza and Jay believe that every town deserves to be seen and celebrated. With over 3 million readers each year, they're proving that thoughtful storytelling and strategic marketing can fuel both tourism and hometown pride across the South.

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LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP PRESENTERS



DR. JEANNE MAES

Dr. Jeanne Maes

Dr. Jeanne Maes wears a lot of hats – as a professor, coach, mediator, and problem-solver. She teaches Management at the University of South Alabama's Mitchell College of Business and also serves as the university's Ombudsperson, where she helps people work through tough conversations and find common ground.

Her background is in organizational communication, negotiation, and conflict resolution – skills she's shared with businesses and organizations across the country and around the world. Whether she's leading a workshop, coaching a team, or stepping in as a mediator, Jeanne brings a practical, people-first approach to every situation.

She's published extensively, serves on several journal boards, and even led the International Society for Organization Development and Change for five years. She also sits on the board for the O.D. Institute in Ghana and is a certified mediator and arbitrator here in Alabama.

Jeanne's work is all about helping people communicate better, collaborate more effectively, and build stronger communities – which makes her a great resource and ally for publishers working to connect and uplift their local audiences.



DR. JENNIFER C. ZOGHBY

Dr. Jennifer C. Zoghby

Dr. Jennifer Zoghby is an Assistant Professor of Management at the Mitchell College of Business at the University of South Alabama, where she focuses her research on entrepreneurship. She's also someone who knows how to connect with real-world audiences – whether that's in a classroom, a boardroom, or a community seminar for local business owners and healthcare leaders.

Born and raised in Mobile, Jennifer grew up in a big Lebanese family that cherished storytelling – something she carried into her early career as an award-winning reporter for The Mobile Press-Register and The Charlotte Business Journal. That love for clear, meaningful communication eventually led her into public relations, where she spent more than a decade leading strategic efforts for the University of South Alabama and its health system. Her work earned 20+ industry awards, and in 2019, she was named Alabama's top PR practitioner.

Jennifer holds degrees in English, Political Science, Public Administration, and Business – so she brings a well-rounded perspective to everything she does. Her mix of academic insight, real-world experience, and deep roots in the Gulf Coast community make her a passionate advocate for small businesses, entrepreneurs, and the local stories that bring places to life. ■

MAXIMIZE GROWTH AND INNOVATION: The Importance of Attending Business Conferences

LET'S FACE IT: IN TODAY'S FAST-PACED BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT, STAYING AHEAD OF THE CURVE ISN'T JUST A LUXURY — IT'S A NECESSITY.

The business landscape is constantly evolving, and those who fail to adapt risk being left behind. But there's a secret weapon out there for those in the know, one that will help you target personal growth, industry insight, and team development: business conferences.

Attending business conferences provides an unparalleled opportunity to not only keep pace with the latest industry trends but also to gain fresh perspectives that can drive your business forward. Whether you're seeking personal growth, deeper industry insights, or ways to enhance your team's skills, conferences are a powerful tool in your arsenal.

But it's not just about what you can gain — it's also about how you can empower your team. Bringing your employees along to these industry events shows a commitment to their professional development and fosters a culture of continuous learning. When your team is exposed to new ideas and cutting-edge strategies, they return to work more motivated, more engaged, and better equipped to contribute to your company's success.

Not convinced? Bet. Pack your bags, because we'll prove that attending that next big industry conference could be the game-changer you and your team have been waiting for.

1. NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

Remember that old saying, "Your network is your net worth"? Well, when you step into a business conference, you're entering a goldmine of opportunities to expand that network — and build lasting connections! Conferences are the ultimate playground for meeting people who can propel your business to new heights.

It's Not Just What You Know, It's Who You Know

Here's why conference networking is a true game-changer: Nearly 100% of people say that face-to-face meetings are essential for building and maintaining lasting business relationships. You get to meet potential clients, partners, and even investors who could be instrumental in your next big venture. Imagine shaking hands with someone who could provide the funding or partnership you've been seeking — *ch-ch-ching!*

Plus, conferences are filled with industry *been-there-done-that's* who are just as passionate and driven as you are. Engaging with these like-minded professionals allows you to exchange ideas and insights, sparking innovation and collaboration. After all, two heads are better than one, especially when those heads belong to people at the top of their game.

But here's the secret sauce: Don't be shy! That person standing next to you in the coffee line? They could

be the key to your next big breakthrough. So, take the leap, strike up that conversation, and watch as your industry network grows faster than you can say "Let's connect on LinkedIn."

2. GAINING INDUSTRY INSIGHTS: STAY AHEAD OR GET LEFT BEHIND

Who hasn't dreamed of peering into the future? Well, when it comes to your industry, attending conferences is the next best thing. These events offer a unique opportunity to glimpse what's on the horizon, giving you a head start on trends and innovations that could shape the future of your business.

Here's what you'll gain from attending:

1. Conferences provide sneak peeks at the latest industry trends and cutting-edge innovations. Being among the first to learn about these developments can give you a competitive advantage, allowing you to stay ahead of the curve and outpace your competitors. Whether it's a new technology, a groundbreaking strategy, or an emerging market, the insights you gain at conferences can be the key to your next big breakthrough.
2. Second, conferences offer the chance to soak up wisdom from industry experts and thought leaders. These are the people who are shaping the future, and their

ATTENDING BUSINESS CONFERENCES

insights are invaluable. It's like having a direct line to the best and brightest minds in your field.

3. Lastly, conferences often include hands-on workshops where you can roll up your sleeves and dive into practical learning. These sessions are designed to help you apply new knowledge and skills directly to your business, ensuring that you leave not just inspired but equipped to make real changes.

3. ENHANCING LEADERSHIP SKILLS: LEVEL UP YOUR LEADERSHIP GAME

Great leaders aren't just born — they're forged through experience, learning, and continuous development. And when it comes to honing your leadership skills, conferences are like intensive boot camps designed to elevate your abilities to new heights. These events offer a concentrated dose of knowledge, insights, and inspiration that can transform the way you lead.

Consider this: Conferences often offer specialized sessions focused on sharpening your leadership toolkit. Whether it's learning new management techniques, enhancing your communication skills, or developing strategies for team building, these sessions provide you with practical tools you can immediately apply in your role.

Better yet, these sessions are crafted by experts who understand the challenges leaders face and are designed to help you tackle those challenges head-on.

Conferences also expose you to diverse perspectives and innovative strategies. Stepping outside your usual environment allows you to see things from different angles and think outside the box. You'll learn from leaders across industries, gaining insights that can help you ap-

proach problems in new and creative ways.

Plus, conferences provide a wellspring of inspiration. Watch as many TED Talks as you want — engaging with fellow leaders in real time and hearing their success stories can reignite your passion for leadership like nothing else. There's an energy in the room (real and virtual) that not only boosts your own motivation but also empowers you to elevate your team — because when you grow as a leader, everyone around you benefits. A rising tide lifts all boats, and your leadership journey is no exception.

4. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGIC GROWTH: PLANT THE SEEDS OF SUCCESS

We've talked about networking, trends, and leadership skills — all huge benefits of attending conferences. But now, let's sink our teeth into the bulk of what conferences are made for: developing your business.

And we're not talking about just soaking up knowledge — conferences are powerful platforms for growing your business in ways you might not expect. These events are where the rubber meets the road, offering tangible opportunities to expand your business, forge key partnerships, and refine your strategic vision. If you're serious about taking your business to the next level, attending conferences should be at the top of your priority list.

Looking for new opportunities, markets, and partnerships? Conferences are your first stop. Whether you're looking to expand into new regions, diversify your offerings, or connect with potential clients, conferences provide a concentrated environment where these opportunities naturally arise. Imagine meeting a potential partner who can help you break into a new market or discover an untapped niche that perfectly

aligns with your business goals — these are the kinds of game-changing moments that happen at conferences.

Second, conferences are ideal for forming strategic alliances that can skyrocket your growth. These alliances might be with other businesses, influencers, or even industry experts who can open doors and provide resources that would otherwise be out of reach.

Lastly, the insights you gain at conferences feed directly into your business strategy. From learning about emerging trends to understanding customer behavior, the knowledge you gain is power — power that you can leverage to make informed decisions and drive your business forward.

5. INVESTING IN EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT: HAPPY EMPLOYEES, HEALTHY BUSINESS

Okay, so now you know why conferences are so crucial for business leaders and entrepreneurs. But they shouldn't be limited to that small group — in fact, business conferences are also crucial for your employees!

Want to know the secret to keeping your A-list players motivated and committed? It's simple: invest in their growth! When you prioritize your employees' professional development, you're not just enhancing their skills — you're showing them that they're valued and that their future matters to the company. And one of the best ways to do this? Sending them to conferences.

Sending your team to conferences is a win-win. First, it empowers your employees to grow professionally. When they attend industry events, they're exposed to new ideas, cutting-edge strategies, and the latest trends, all of which can inspire them to bring fresh perspectives and innovative solutions back to your organization. Watching your team members flourish as they gain

ATTENDING BUSINESS CONFERENCES

confidence and expertise is incredibly rewarding — and it directly benefits your business.

Second, conferences foster a culture of continuous learning and development. In today's fast-paced world, standing still is not an option. By encouraging your team to attend conferences, you're signaling that your company values growth, adaptability, and staying ahead of the curve. This culture of learning keeps your business dynamic and forward-thinking.

Lastly, investing in your employees' growth boosts retention and engagement. When employees feel supported in their professional journey, they're more likely to be engaged, satisfied, and loyal to the company. Happy employees are productive employees, and by investing in their development, you're creating a positive feedback loop that benefits everyone.

In the end, a well-developed team is not just a company asset — it's the driving force behind your business's success.

6. PRACTICAL TIPS FOR MAXIMIZING CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

Ready to make the most of your next conference? Follow these steps to ensure you get the maximum return on your investment!

Before the conference:

- **Do your homework:** Research the speakers, sessions, and attendees. Understanding who will be there and what topics will be covered allows you to plan your schedule strategically and ensures you don't miss out on key opportunities.
- **Set clear goals:** What do you want to achieve at the conference? Whether it's networking with specific individuals, learning about a particular trend, or finding new business opportuni-

ties, having clear objectives will keep you focused and purposeful.

- **Pack your business cards:** Yes, they're still a thing! Despite the digital age, business cards remain a quick and effective way to exchange contact information and leave a lasting impression.

During the conference:

- **Don't just attend—engage!:** Ask questions, participate in discussions, and don't be afraid to share your own insights. The more you engage, the more value you'll extract from each session.
- **Take notes like your business depends on it:** Because it might! Capturing key takeaways, ideas, and strategies during the sessions ensures you have a wealth of information to refer back to and implement.
- **Network, network, network:** Did we mention network? Conferences are prime opportunities to meet like-minded professionals, potential partners, and industry leaders. Make connections, exchange ideas, and don't forget to follow up.

After the conference:

- **Follow up with new connections:** Strike while the iron is hot! Send personalized follow-up emails to the people you met, expressing your interest in continuing the conversation or exploring potential collaborations.
- **Share your learnings with your team:** Don't keep all the valuable insights to yourself. Sharing what you've learned with your team not only spreads knowledge but also demonstrates your commitment to collective growth.

- **Implement new ideas and strategies:** Knowledge without action is just trivia. Take the ideas and strategies you've learned and put them into practice in your business. This is where the real value of attending the conference is realized—when you translate knowledge into tangible results.

Attending business conferences isn't just about collecting swag bags (although those are nice too). It's about supercharging your growth, staying ahead of the curve, and investing in your team's success.

So, what are you waiting for? It's time to identify those must-attend conferences in your industry and start making plans. Trust us, your future self (and your business) will thank you. ■

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Original article link:

🏠 <https://trainual.com/manual/maximize-growth-and-innovation-the-importance-of-attending-business-conferences>

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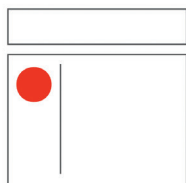
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2022



Name: **KARA IVISON**
 Age: **30**
 Publishing Company
 or Publication: **FEATURED MEDIA**
 Job Title: **ASSISTANT CREATIVE DIRECTOR**

Job Responsibilities: I help oversee the ads and digital side of our creative department, working across a variety of platforms to for both our internal teams and customers. I create and manage digital campaigns like programmatic campaigns, websites, social media content, email blasts, and more. On the print side, I design ads for our Penny Saver publications, help develop promotions for our sales team, and serve as an editor and designer for Buffalo Home magazine.

Year you became a Rising Star: **2022**
 How long have you worked in this industry? **8 years**

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS:

1. What is one significant takeaway you've gained from being part of the Rising Stars program?

One of the biggest takeaways I've had from being part of the Rising Stars program is how much my confidence has grown, I see it in myself more recently and I'm sure the team would agree. When I first joined, I was definitely a little nervous and tended to hang back during our

calls. But after the past few years, I've found myself speaking up more, sharing ideas, and engaging with the group. It's been rewarding to feel that shift, not just in how I participate, but in how comfortable and connected I've become.

2. What do you think the future looks like for the community paper industry?

I'm sure I'm not the only one who sees how important community papers continue to be in local communities, especially in areas underserved by media outlets. Recently adding more publication areas under Feature Media's publishing made me realize this even more than before. Hyper-local content, accessibility, and connections to small businesses is essential.

For the future, I think we'll continue to see more integration with digital platforms whether it's social media, digital editions, or even company websites. And with the rise of AI, creating trustworthy content will always be key.



Name: **CHRISTINE WHITE**
 Age: **37**
 Publishing Company
 or Publication: **FEATURED MEDIA**
 Job Title: **DIGITAL MEDIA STRATEGIST**

Job Responsibilities: I sell digital marketing and print products for new/existing customers

Year you became a Rising Star: **2022**

How long have you worked in this industry? **6 years**

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS:

1. What is one significant takeaway you've gained from being part of the Rising Stars program?

Our monthly meeting discussions help me take a deeper dive into my personal and professional development, along with networking with other rising stars.

2. What do you think the future looks like for the community paper industry?

I feel that as long as the community paper industry stays competitive with relevant information, content and new offerings, it will continue to grow.

2023



NAME: **KARI JURRENS**
 AGE: **37**
 PUBLISHING COMPANY OR
 PUBLICATION: **NEW CENTURY PRESS**
 JOB TITLE: **MEDIA SPECIALIST**
 JOB RESPONSIBILITIES: **SELLING PRINT & DIGITAL ADVERTISING**

Year you became a Rising Star: **2023**
 How long have you worked in this industry? **15**

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS:

RISING STARS

1. What is one significant take-away you've gained from being part of the Rising Stars program?

The importance of thinking of all size publications as well as all different aspects of that publication. Our group has everything from design to sales and editorial to proof reading. We all look at the situation differently and how can we best merge those ideas

2. What do you think the future looks like for the community paper industry?

The paper industry after a couple of tough years is finally back on the rise. Covid hit our industry hard by closing some publications, cutting down routes to deliver, advertising cut backs and so much more and advertisers budgets are finally coming back and they need us as much as we need them.



Name: **KAITLIN DONNAN**

Age: **31**

Publishing Company

or Publication: **FEATURED MEDIA**

Job Title: **PROOFREADER**

Job Responsibilities: **I PROOFREAD AND EDIT COPY FOR ADS, PRODUCTS, GUIDES, AND ARTICLES TO ENSURE EVERYTHING IS READY TO GO TO PRINT. I'M ALSO A CONTENT WRITER FOR OUR HOME MAGAZINE PUBLICATION.**

Year you became a Rising Star: **2023**

How long have you worked in this industry? **6 years**

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS:

1. What is one significant take-away you've gained from being part of the Rising Stars program?

Getting to meet and know other people in the field, along with the chance to network and share ideas and talents. There is so much creativity among our peers, and I've enjoyed being able to put names with faces and real people!

2. What do you think the future looks like for the community paper industry?

It's still going strong and I think readers appreciate the human and community aspect, along with the trust they can find in community papers. The industry itself should be willing and able to be flexible and innovate, and I truly believe we have and continue to be!



Name: **JAYDE VOGELER**

Age: **29**

Publishing Company or Publication:

BIG GREEN UMBRELLA MEDIA

Job Title: **GRAPHIC DESIGNER**

Job Responsibilities: **I CREATE ADS FOR OUR MANY PUBLICATIONS, SPEC ADS FOR POTENTIAL CLIENTS, DO ANYTHING TO HELP OUT OUR CREATIVE DIRECTOR.**

Year you became a Rising Star: **2023**

How long have you worked in this industry? **I've been with BGUM for 3.5 years and a graphic designer for almost 7 years.**

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS:

1. What is one significant take-away you've gained from being part of the Rising Stars program?

Getting creative in different ways! As I mostly work designing print advertisements, I've had to expand my creative thinking coming up with ideas for non-print marketing for ACP/Rising Stars and now creating thoughtful social media posts. The extra creative thinking reflects in my work as I carefully consider how to execute my designs.

2. What do you think the future looks like for the community paper industry?

As community publishers, I believe expanding outside of traditional print advertising revenue to support our publications is becoming more prevalent. ACP works hard to bring resources for members to expand revenue sources. One of ACP's greatest strengths is its close-knit community; members sharing ideas and supporting one another makes a real impact. It will be a learning curve, but it will be rewarding in the long run!

2024



Name: **SHELBY PALMER**

Age: **31**

Publishing Company or Publication:

THE EXCHANGE

Job Title: **CREATIVE MEDIA MANAGER**

Job Responsibilities: **Graphic Design,**

Marketing Emails, Social Media Marketing, Newspaper Layout & Design

Year you became a Rising Star: 2024

How long have you worked in this industry? 4 years

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS:

1. What is one significant take-away you've gained from being part of the Rising Stars program?

A significant take away I have gained from being a part of the Rising Stars program is how important it is to network with not only people in your industry, and in your departments, but also with people outside of your industry. You gain so much insight from other professionals.

2. What do you think the future looks like for the community paper industry?

I think the future of the community paper industry is as open ended as we make it. We are a part of this industry, and we can adapt to our readers in whatever way feels best for our regions. Personally, I think more robust online options will go hand in hand with updated printed strategies. There is always and will always be people who trust a tangible printed product more than an online ad. The physical representation of the services or products outweighs and compliments the online presence in many cases. When we get to share with our community we become an integral part of it. That is what we should strive for as community publications.

Job Responsibilities: I help support and meet weekly demands at the company. I create various design projects for clients and internal use which include countless print, promotional, community directories, digital media, signage, apparel and more.



Name: **CAITLIN NEELAND**

Age: **31**

Publishing Company or Publication: **FEATURED MEDIA**

Job Title: **GRAPHIC DESIGNER**

Year you became a Rising Star: 2024

How long have you worked in this industry? 9

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS:

1. What is one significant take-away you've gained from being part of the Rising Stars program?

In today's digital world, being part of a group and making even a small difference means everything. It allows me to meet new people, build connections, learn industry tips and tricks, and make a meaningful impact in this organization using my skills

2. What do you think the future looks like for the community paper industry?

This world is ever-changing and fast-paced, but I believe the paper and community paper industry will always have a place. To sustain production, there may be changes in operations, marketing strategies, content, or design. We'll need to grow and adapt with the times, but by coming together and maintaining a strong, connected community, the community paper industry can continue to thrive.

2025



Name: **TREVOR ROMERO**

Age: **28**

Publishing Company or Publication: **EL CLASIFICADO**

Job Title: **MARKETING MANAGER**

Job Responsibilities: Head of brand and product marketing for the company's flagship publication El Clasificado.

Year you became a Rising Star: 2025

How long have you worked in this industry? 10 years

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS:

1. What is one significant take-away you hope to gain from being part of the Rising Stars program?

a. I want to meet other young people who work at free publications and gain insights on the challenges my company is facing. I am one of the youngest people at my company, and I'd like to see how others in my same situation are innovating in an aging industry.

2. What do you think the future looks like for the community paper industry?

I think that in the future, community papers will be seen less as a need, as they once were, and more of a deliberate choice to consume media in this way. They will be an alternative source to get focused information in our distracted world.

For this reason, community papers will need to adapt by being innovative, stylish, and interesting to young people who see reading newspapers



Name: **EVELYN SPENCE**
Age: **26**
Publishing Company or Publication: **COASTAL VIEW NEWS**
Job Title: **MANAGING EDITOR**
Job Responsibilities: I manage a core team of five and 25+ freelancers

and columnists to produce a weekly, free print newspaper that covers the Carpinteria Valley and nearby Summerland.

Year you became a Rising Star: 2025
How long have you worked in this industry?: Including my time as a student journalist, I have worked in this industry for eight years.

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS:

1. What is one significant takeaway you hope to gain from being part of the Rising Stars program?

In this job, you never stop learning. It's big reason why I work in journalism — it's never boring. As a member of the Rising Stars program, I'm looking forward to meeting with budding journalists and industry veterans and learning from their

perspectives to help better shape my own reporting for my community.

2. What do you think the future looks like for the community paper industry?

The future of the community newspaper industry is dependent on the value it brings to a community. In 2023, when my publishers announced our paper may shut down due to a lack of advertisement funding, the Carpinteria community rallied around us and donated heavily. Two years later, we're still here. That moment stayed with me. Access to community media is extremely important in the age of misinformation. Most folks don't have time to watch a six-hour city council meeting; they'd rather read the recap and the highlights in their weekly paper. The future of free newspaper journalism must involve a heavy community-newspaper partnership.

ACP CONFERENCE ATTENDEE QUOTES

“Getting new ideas and learning how other publishers operate is extremely important. The other publishers at ACP events are always willing to share.”

“It provides a unique opportunity to network with others that do what you do, but don't compete in the same market, AND...every problem you are experiencing has already been solved by someone you will meet at conference.”

★ ★ ★ ★ ★



2024 Norfolk ACP Conference Attendees

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Trib Total Media – Article

The Resilience of Newspaper Advertising in the Digital Age

By Al DiCroce

This quick read offers some solid factors on the reason print advertising still holds an important place in local marketing programs. If you're looking to make a case of mixed marketing with print and digital – check this one out.

🏠 <https://mediakit.triblive.com/blog/the-resilience-of-newspaper-advertising-in-the-digital-age/>



Serchen – Article

Newspaper Ads: A Guide to Effective Advertising in Print Media

By Jaime

This article covers a great deal of ground on print ads from a non-partisan source. There's plenty of excellent takeaways offered throughout but also a few reality checks that you won't want to share.

🏠 <https://blog.serchen.com/newspaper-ads/>



Futuramo – Blog Article

Why Should Business Professionals Attend a Conference?

This 6 minute read covers plenty of ground on the “whys” for attending a conference. If you need your business to remain relevant in a transitional marketplace, you should follow this sound advice.

🏠 <https://futuramo.com/blog/why-should-business-professionals-attend-a-conference/>



SMI Financial Coaching - Article

7 Reasons Why Entrepreneurs Should Attend Small Business Conferences

By Sylvia Inks

This article walks through the author's experience in actual conference attendance and provides firsthand examples of what she got out of it. It may be a different industry, but the benefits are really universal.

🏠 <https://smifinancialcoaching.com/reasons-entrepreneurs-should-attend-business-conferences/>



Two Roads – Article

6 Benefits of Attending Conferences for Small Business Owners

Although written from an accounting world experience, the details of the 6 benefits are as relevant today as they were in 2023 when this was written. The links to additional articles also offer valuable small business information and advice.

🏠 <https://www.tworoadsco.com/why-small-business-owners-should-attend-at-least-one-business-conference-a-year>



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8 MANIPULATIVE NEGOTIATION TACTICS and How To Handle Them

BY JAMES A. BAKER – FOUNDER, BAKER COMMUNICATIONS

A negotiation tactic, as compared to a negotiation strategy, is a single maneuver to be employed in the heat of battle; a move, countermove or adjustment employed as you work to gain the best possible outcome at any given moment. Tactics may also be used manipulatively by another party, to move you from a position of safety to a place where you are more vulnerable to attack. As a negotiator, you must be prepared for such tactics at every turn.

Most tactics fall into one of five basic categories: Pressure, Delaying, Manipulative, Power (One-Up) and Collaborative. We will discuss some commonly used tactics, and how to identify and neutralize them to keep the negotiation on the principled track.

PRESSURE TACTICS

1. *Deadlines* pressure both parties in a negotiation to make choices and are used to create movement. Deadlines may be artificial or real. They can be external deadlines imposed by the other party or internal deadlines within your own organization. “If I don’t get your order by Friday, I can’t guarantee the delivery you need.”

— To neutralize the Deadline, test it. Ask questions to see how real and how firm it is. The person setting the deadline is counting on the fact that it’s human nature to believe deadlines are real. It is in your best interest to be skeptical. If you decide that the deadline is real, determine where it comes from, whether an extension is possible, and what the consequences would be of missing the deadline.

2. *Competition* is another powerful pressure tactic. When people are clamoring for the other party’s

product, they can charge a more competitive price. When people are clamoring to sell to you, you can generally pay a lower price. The other party can “create” competition by saying, “We’ll have to send this out for bids.” They can also create a sense of competition by talking about previous orders with other companies or about what someone else is doing. “I like your product, but Acme down the street sells almost the same thing for \$100 less. Can you match that?”

— To neutralize this tactic, ask questions to find out as much information as possible about what the competition is offering. Is the product the same? Is it of the same quality? What are the payment terms? Are they adding more charges for delivery or packaging?

DELAY TACTICS

3. The *Limited Authority* tactic creates a situation where the negotiator cites their limited ability to make a decision, creating a stall in the negotiations. The advantage of using Limited Authority is that it may lower your aspiration level. It also allows time to delay decisions. “My boss will have to authorize this.”

— The keys to countering this tactic are finding out who makes decisions and arranging a way to meet with them. It is important, when possible, to start negotiating with the individual who has final authority in order to prevent this tactic from being used. Try to find out what standards are used to determine whether an agreement will be authorized or not.

4. A similar and related tactic, the *Missing Person* tactic, occurs when the other party acts as if

the Missing Person needs to be included in the deal, wouldn’t accept something you’re suggesting, or needs to be consulted on some detail. It’s not that the person you’re talking to wouldn’t like to continue the negotiation, but they say someone else needs to be involved — someone who was never present at the meeting or who left earlier, or someone who has to authorize something. “I can’t discuss delivery times because our scheduling manager is out for the rest of the week.”

— Prior to negotiating, attempt to find out who makes final decisions regarding delivery times, price, payment terms, etc. You can also ask to set up a meeting with that person if the other party attempts to use this tactic.

MANIPULATIVE TACTICS

5. The *Moral Appeal* tactic is supposed to remind you that the goal of the negotiation is mutual satisfaction. It appeals to your sense of fairness. It includes any statement whose purpose is to get you onto the other party’s side. “Let’s be fair. You can’t expect a firm price with the problems in the economy.”

— Explain to the other party that the terms you have agreed to are in each other’s best interests. Ask probing questions to find out what will happen to the other party. What is their underlying motivation?

6. *Good Guy/Bad Guy* — we have all seen this one used on police shows on television. One member of a negotiating team takes an extreme stand or radical position, making excessive demands and refusing to offer reasonable con-

MANAGEMENT TRAINING

cessions. This tends to intimidate you, get you off-balance and lower your aspiration. Then the “Good Guy” comes into the act with conciliatory and soothing comments and a more reasonable offer. Even though the offer may still not be very good in absolute terms, it looks great in comparison to what the “Bad Guy” had to say. Often the natural impulse is to agree.

— Be careful not to be taken in by the Good Guy. While his offer may sound fantastic compared to the Bad Guy’s, the terms may still be unacceptable. Find out more about the terms, and see if they are consistent with your objectives.

POWER TACTICS

7. Blanketing is generalizing: saying that everyone’s doing it. Kids are experts at this tactic. However, it also appears frequently in business. The objective of the tactic is to create credibility and weaken the other side’s position. “How can

I continue to buy from you? Everyone else is lowering their prices.”

— Use objective criteria to determine just what the correct (fair) provisions of your agreement should be. For example: industry standards, rate of inflation, or standard profit margin. Also, ask questions to find out what the competition is offering or what deals have been drawn up with other clients. “Who is ‘everyone’?”

8. Association is a tactic that may occur in conjunction with Blanketing. Many of the most successful sales people will use this tactic at the beginning of a sales call or a negotiation to enhance their credibility. Also known as “name dropping,” this tactic is a popular way of increasing the other party’s power in a negotiation. It can be blatant or subtle. It is most effective when true, but can be very manipulative when untrue. “This project reminds me of one I did for B.F. Goodrich.”

— Ask the other party probing questions to find out what they did for the other companies. What terms did they agree to? How large was their order? Get as many details as possible about what they’ve done for them in the past.

With a basic understanding of the types of manipulative tactics and how they work, you can move to neutralize almost anything the other party attempts. Remember to keep working on a principled level and try for a win-win outcome.

Baker Communications offers leading edge time management and personal productivity solutions that will help you address the goals and achieve the outcomes addressed in this article. For more information about how your organization can achieve immediate and lasting behavior change that will help your team members consistently achieve their high value goals while eliminating time wasted on interruptions and distractions, go to: <https://www.bakercommunications.com/index.html>

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WOULD YOU MIND SHOWING ME AROUND?



BY JOHN FOUST
GREENSBORO, NC

One of the most important questions you can ask an advertising client is, “Would you mind showing me around?”

Think about it. When you have a conversation in a client’s office, you get a filtered version of that person’s business. There’s a good chance that many of his or her comments have been rehearsed, because those same questions have been asked by other salespeople. Across-the-desk conversations are fine for gathering general advertising information, but when it comes to idea generation, it’s a good strategy to leave the office and take a tour. You’ll be surprised at the things you’ll see and hear that can spark ad ideas.

During my ad agency days, I remember talking to a residential real estate developer who repeatedly told me that his company’s greatest strength was “attention to details.” When I asked for examples, he

talked in vague terms about good products, good design and good craftsmanship. There was nothing specific, nothing that provoked an idea for his advertising. Obviously, he was repeating the same talking points he had given dozens of times. So, I asked if he would mind showing me around the subdivision in which his crews were working. He eagerly agreed – and we made the short trip to a job site. When he was surrounded by specifics, he began to talk in specifics. He explained why his bannisters and kitchen cabinets and finish nails and hardwood floors were better than those in other houses. He showed me how they were marking certain trees for saving. He showed me why their energy efficient features exceeded the going standards for that time.

My head was swimming with ideas – ad concepts I couldn’t have gotten from a conversation in his office. The end result was a campaign which featured a lot of photographs, evidence of the “attention to detail” which meant so much to him. The tour made that claim come to life on the printed page.

“Would you mind showing me around?” That question can be worth its weight in ideas. If your schedule doesn’t allow time for lengthy tours, a simple walk-through can be helpful. Or you can ask to see photographs and product diagrams. Almost

anything that gets clients away from their standard talking points can help you gain a better understanding of their businesses and their customers.

This strategy has a couple of important benefits. First – as long as you are completely sincere in your interest – you will provide your clients with the chance to talk about one of their favorite subjects: how their products are designed, made, stored, distributed or sold. This can strengthen your rapport and give you a solid foundation for future conversations. From then on, you’ll share some common knowledge about their business operation.

Second, you’ll find a ton of ad possibilities. Ideas are out there. This gives you a practical way to look for them.

Sometimes the right ad campaign starts with the right question. Just think of it as “attention to detail.” ■

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John Foust has conducted training programs for thousands of newspaper advertising professionals. Many ad departments are using his training videos to save time and get quick results from in-house training.

E-mail for information:
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THE SECRET INGREDIENT TO POWERFUL PRINT ADVERTISING: THE OFFER

BY JAMES A. BAKER - FOUNDER AND CEO, BAKER COMMUNICATIONS

When it comes to designing effective print ads, many businesses focus first on the visual elements—the headline, the photo, the color scheme. Those are all important, but there's one factor that can make or break your ad's success: the offer.

Your offer is the reason someone stops, reads, and takes action. It's the "what's in it for me?" that drives a potential customer from passive observer to active buyer. Without a strong offer, your ad is just a pretty picture taking up space.

WHY THE OFFER MATTERS MORE THAN YOU THINK

In print advertising, attention is scarce. Your audience is flipping through pages, scanning quickly, and deciding in seconds whether to keep reading. A strong offer gives them a reason to pause and engage.

Think of it like fishing: your headline is the hook, your design is the lure, but the offer is the bait. Without the bait, no matter how shiny your lure, you're not going to catch much.

A great offer can:

- **Create urgency** – Limited-time deals push readers to act now rather than "someday."
- **Lower the risk** – Guarantees, free trials, or "no obligation" offers make it easier for someone to say yes.
- **Add value** – Bundles, bonuses, or exclusive content can make your product stand out from competitors.

WHAT MAKES A STRONG OFFER?

A strong offer is:

1. **Clear** – Readers should understand exactly what they're getting in seconds.
2. **Compelling** – It should feel valuable enough to grab attention.
3. **Time-sensitive** – A ticking clock encourages action.
4. **Relevant** – The offer should match the needs and interests of your target audience.

Examples that work well in print ads include:

- "Buy One, Get One Free This Weekend Only"
- "Free Consultation for Readers of [Publication Name]"
- "\$20 Off Your First Order – Expires August 31"

PLACEMENT AND VISIBILITY

Don't bury your offer in small print or hide it at the bottom of the ad. Make it a focal point—bold text, contrasting color, maybe even its own graphic. People should be able to spot it instantly, even if they're just skimming.

TRACKABLE OFFERS PAY OFF TWICE

Here's another advantage: when you use a coupon code, special phone number, or a "mention this ad" prompt, you create a built-in way to measure your ad's success. This lets you see exactly how well your message is performing and refine future campaigns.

Example: Local Café Advertising in a Community Newspaper	
Without a Strong Offer	With a Strong Offer
Headline: "Sunrise Café – Your Neighborhood Gathering Spot"	Headline: "FREE Coffee with Any Breakfast – This Week Only!"
Body Text: "Come enjoy fresh coffee, homemade pastries, and a welcoming atmosphere. Open daily 7 AM – 2 PM."	Body Text: "Stop by Sunrise Café this week and get a FREE 12 oz. coffee with any breakfast order. Show this ad to redeem. Offer ends Sunday, August 17."
Call to Action: "Visit us at 123 Main Street."	Call to Action: "Visit 123 Main Street – Don't forget to bring this ad!"
Impact: Reader may smile, but no urgency to act; might file it away in memory for later.	Impact: Creates immediate incentive to visit now, drives measurable foot traffic, easy to track by counting ads redeemed.

FINAL THOUGHT

In print advertising, you're not just competing for attention—you're competing for action. A beautiful ad might get a nod of appreciation, but a powerful, irresistible offer will get results. The next time you design a print ad, start with your offer first. Everything else—headline, visuals, layout—should work together to highlight and amplify it. ■

This article was created with the assistance of ChatGPT.

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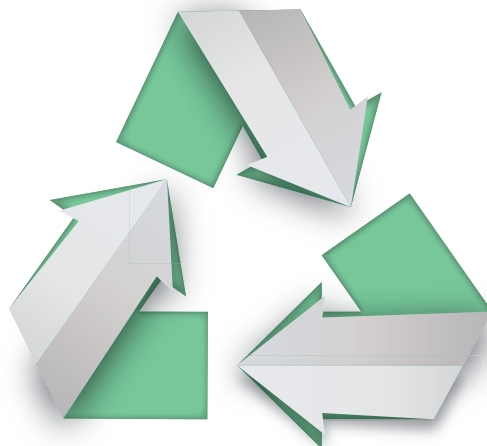
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