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Community Papers of Michigan

INFORMER

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Community Papers – It’s a Wonderful Life!



Jack Guza,
CPM Executive Director

It's Christmas time once again. CPM's members are busy preparing their final issues of the year and juggling schedules, press and delivery times to work around this most glorious holiday of the year. With Christmas Day falling on a Friday this year, most will enjoy at least three days off to celebrate with family and friends and to reflect on the meaning of the holiday.

Christmas is a celebration of our Savior's birth and also a time to carry on traditions our parents instilled in us. Some traditions are very personal. Those outside of an immediate family may find these traditions funny or outright strange; but to many, those are the traditions they hold dear and part of what makes Christmas special to them as it was shared with those they loved the most.

The tradition my family keeps alive each Christmas is to bake and decorate Christmas cookies from my mom's recipe. I have to say this is the best sugar cookie recipe I have ever eaten, and I have had my share (and then some) of Christmas cookies over the

years. I remember as a little boy decorating the cookies saying, "I can't wait until next year when we decorate cookies again." My Mom would laugh and tell me to enjoy decorating the cookies in front of me now.

Many read 'Twas the Night Before Christmas' every Christmas Eve to their wide-eyed children or grandchildren. Some watch a Christmas movie they had shared a laugh or a tear with a loved one who is no longer with them, taking them back to when they were together.

One such movie that has touched countless lives is 'It's a Wonderful Life'. This movie first appeared in theatres December 25, 1946. This classic remains one of the most popular Christmas movies of all time with a timeless message. George Bailey, played by James Stewart, dedicates his life to helping others in his small hometown of Bedford Falls. Through a series of incidents, George felt his life was worthless and he could not go on. His Guardian Angel, "Clarence," was sent to show George his life was worth living and he had touched countless lives in his community. Clarence had to change George's mind to earn his wings to become a full-fledged angel. After Clarence showed George how things would have turned out for his family, friends and community without him, Clarence stated one of the movies most famous quotes, "Strange, isn't it? Each man's life touches so many other lives. When he isn't around he leaves an awful hole, doesn't he?"

As you know, George discovered just how wonderful his life was through the

many friends he had made in his community, and through the kindness he had shown others throughout his life as they all rallied around him to save his business and show him what he meant to them.

It's a Wonderful Life is the favorite movie of my former boss, friend and mentor, Mark Rummel, who worked for decades with his family-owned Thumb Publications company, in Huron County, Mich. Mark's company included several highly successful weekly newspapers and the innovative Thumb Blanket shopper, where I started my career in this industry in January of 1980. Mark was also a former board member and treasurer of CPM. Mark once shared in an email exchange with me after I moved from Bad Axe to accept this position seven years ago (referencing this movie and how it related to my career and my life after many years of serving our readers, advertisers, colleagues, employees, community and the many family and friends I left behind) writing, "You matter - what you do makes a difference."

I will never forget Mark's kind words and I want to share that same message with you. Never forget what you do each and every week in and outside of the office matters to so many others. We are all in the people business along with the publishing business. You and your publications make a difference in the communities you serve. That's why I truly believe in Community Papers – It's a Wonderful Life!

Merry Christmas!
Jack



WHEN SPACE IN AN AD IS LIMITED, THIS TECHNIQUE CAN BE A BIG HELP...

Type on a Path

Type on a path can be a big help when you have a limited space to work—and in today's market, limited space seems to be the norm. I found a simple heading in the *Metro Newspaper Service* (December 2009, page 66) that I believe will work for my purposes. It's not exactly what I want, but the idea is there. I will deconstruct the original heading and just use elements of the original that will suit my goal of a badge or "tag" that I can use in a number of ways.

Cookie Recipes

This bears repeating. This is the time of year when cookie recipes are big! For gifts, for parties, desserts—for sharing! I liked the "Santa's Cookie Picks" header, but I want to make it a little more generic, I don't know, maybe just "Holiday Cookies" will be enough. By the way, I am using the header at 36% of its original size.



I liked the casual type that was chosen for this heading, however, if I am going to use type on a circular path, I need to be a little more discriminating. Type on a circle path looks best in all caps. Descenders that hang below the baseline become a distraction as you'll soon see. I have used the typeface *Postino Italic* because it comes closest to the type used in the original heading. I have used the TYPE ON A PATH OPTION "Rainbow," but I'm really not liking it already and I haven't even added the cookie art. Anyway, the first version is upper and lowercase and it looks a little "messy." The second version is all caps and while it suggests the outline of a circle better, I think I will choose another typeface altogether. (Typeface size is 20 point in both cases.)



At this point, I'm also making the words run in just the top portion of the circle. I decided to let the artwork stand on its own, so my type for "Holiday Cookies" is *Myriad Pro Black Condensed*, plus the words are now 32

point. And rather than base align the text to the path, I chose center align because I tinted the inside circle and wanted the "parts" to seem more connected.

I also chose to add a stroke and small dark shadow to just the text area. The amount of space you have to work with will dictate the size of the heading.



Heading with lots of cookies!

In the next column, I offer some variations on this item. Some will work well smaller, as a "badge" or "tag" to unite similar items. This type of heading can be done with Happy Hours, Gift Baskets, Brunches... whatever! Just use appropriate artwork and scale to balance the heading.

Type size is now 26 point, but the circle is reduced to accommodate a smaller area. We don't need as many cookies either!



Same as above with just a few of the items shifted. 2 CIRCLES were required, so I repositioned "Cookies" to the bottom of the circle, and choose "flip" on my Type on a Path options. Since I did not base align the text, I also had to delete the color from the circle on "Cookies" so both "Holiday" and "Cookies" would appear to overlap the tinted bottom circle. And once again, I had to shift the cookies to create a more cohesive look.



I was able to do all of the type on a path in *Adobe InDesign*. Before I would have had to do the work in *Adobe Illustrator* and go back and adjust. *QuarkXPress* has similar features, and the procedure is pretty much the same, so you should be able to accomplish this technique in that program as well.

The only *Illustrator* work is the cookie art and I can shift, modify and import very quickly.

If you are planning on using the art as a header or a "tag," you can place it in a library, or create a PDF to use whenever you need to. Once the initial work is done, you can reduce, reuse or recycle... how great is that!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Back in the old days, I did a "Sale" border very much like this one with the font *Bermuda Squiggle*. I was using *QuarkXPress* at the time, so I made some adjustments—like not doing a real type on path! So I have updated the type on path for use in *InDesign* and this is truly one long rectangular path. Did I have to do a little tweaking? Heck yea! But it wasn't too bad nor did it take much time—maybe 5–8 minutes to get the text to come out even. Probably about the same amount of time it took in 2004 to create separate boxes and place them around the border. So it's a wash.

Now experiment with other shapes. I use *Adobe CS 6*, but I've been using this technique since *Adobe CS 3*.

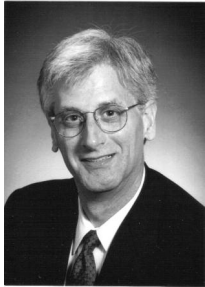
Well this wraps it up for another year and I also find myself craving some Christmas cookies! I will be back in January, BUT, I still welcome your ideas, comments and concerns, so e-mail to the address below.

A Blessed Holiday to all!



I welcome your input and suggestions. I entered the publishing business after nine years as a high school art teacher and taught software programs at technical school. I also write for *The Independent Publisher*, and I'm still learning. E-mail: hanrahan.ln@att.net
Ellen Hanrahan ©2015

Incongruence In Ad Creativity



By John Foust
Raleigh, NC

Congruence is an important characteristic of communication. In order to get a message through, all of the ingredients have to match. Most of the time, congruence comes naturally. Just notice how strange it feels to say the word “yes” and shake your head “no.”

On the other hand, incongruence can generate memorable advertising. Years ago, Volkswagen ran a famous ad which pictured a large photo of their beetle with the simple headline, “Lemon.” The copy explained that the car had been rejected by their inspectors, because a small part – the chrome strip on the glove compartment – was blemished.

The headline didn’t match the photo. How could this shiny new car possibly be a lemon? That’s the power of strategic incongruence.

Unexpected photo-headline combinations are not limited to national advertisers. Consider an ad I once saw for a local title insurance company. Most ads for that industry reflect the somber nature of the profession. Indemnity issues, title defects, and unenforceable mortgage loans are not the most exciting topics in the world.

This was an image ad – a business-to-business ad – which was intended to build name recognition in the legal and real estate markets. When I called the company to get the inside story, I learned that the idea had started with a session to photograph a standard (in other words, boring) pose of the executives of the company sitting at a conference table. At some point, someone told a joke that cracked up the group, and the photographer caught the unscripted moment. A couple of the executives were leaning back in their chairs, grinning from ear to ear. One was rolling her eyes to the ceiling. And another was raising his hands in the air. It looked like they were having the time of their lives.

When the company reviewed the photos, they decided – with lots of encouragement from the photographer – to use the laughing photo. Although it was a complete departure from the original plan, they revamped the copy to fit. With the headline,

“Title insurance is serious business,” the ad humanized the company and presented those executives as the kind of people you’d like to know. The message was relevant. It made readers think, “Hey, they’re a team. They’re good enough at what they do to relax and enjoy their work. They won’t bore me to death when I call.”

The title insurance company told me the original headline was supposed to be something like, “We’re here to take care of your title insurance needs.” Pretty weak, huh?

An ad like that would have gotten lost in the blur of countless conference table photos that readers had seen over the years. But thanks to the company’s creative flexibility, they ended up with a memorable message that stood out from their starched competitors.

Incongruence is no laughing matter. With the avalanche of words and images that bombard consumers each day, it’s smart to use a little incongruence every now and then to break away from the crowd.

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: john@johnfoust.com



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Papers Partners With Postal Service And Mail Drives Mobile Promotion To Help Our Heroes

When Dan Alexander, publisher and owner of Denton Publications, Inc. the publisher of Sun Community News and Printing, got up early to attend a postal round table at the AFCP annual conference in 2015, he was looking for the latest information on postal service rates, service changes, and promotions. Dan is always on the lookout for ideas that can help his paper, his customers, and

significantly, other papers in the industry. As the publisher of a community newspaper, with distribution through much of the North Eastern portion of New York, Dan values the Postal Service and his relationship with the USPS. Dan describes the Postal Service as a “vital partner” and “the best distribution system in the world.”

(Cont.)

(Cont.) Dan is also a passionate spokesperson for the free paper industry and the ability of community newspapers to provide advertisers with the relevant, locally delivered, print advertising messages they need.

When Dan heard about the Postal Service's 2015 Mail Drives Mobile Engagement, six month 2 percent discount incentive program, he recognized an opportunity to do more than just earn a discount for his own paper. Donna Hanbery, Executive Director for the Saturation Mailers Coalition, explained how the incentive program was designed to connect consumers to the internet to trigger an online purchase with a product, or mailed confirmation and receipt, delivered by the USPS. Dan saw an opportunity to use the USPS promotion, combined with a donated ad from his publication and that of other papers, to help support Fisher House Foundation, an A+ rated charity that relies on the generosity of the American public to fund its homes and programs. AFCP, and other state, regional, and national free paper associations acting individually, and through Paper Chain, have supported the work of Fisher House Foundation for the past two years. Fisher House is best known for its network of comfort homes where military veteran families can stay at no cost while a loved one is receiving treatment.

Dan did the leg work to look into the Postal promotion and to determine the steps that would need to be followed for a publisher, and the Fisher House promotional ads, to qualify for the two percent Postal discount.

So what is Fisher House, and how did it become to be the sponsored cause for the free paper industry? The story begins with Loren Colburn, AFCP Executive Director. When the Government shut down occurred a few years ago, Loren Colburn heard that Fisher House was stepping up to help ensure that military families would continue to receive death

benefits for those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Loren, like many Americans, was moved by Fisher House offering to do what the Federal Government would not. He also saw the opportunities for home town American to contribute to Fisher House in meaningful ways. Fisher House accepts donations, large and small, in the form of cash, but can also use donations of airline and hotel points or miles to help military families travel to be with a loved one and find lodging in areas where Fisher House does not have one of its "home away from homes" to house military families. Loren describes Fisher House Foundation "as the perfect opportunity for home town America to move the needle to help a good cause in a meaningful way."

Loren reached out to the Foundation to receive information and sample ads that free papers could include as part of their community service commitment to help Fisher Houses nationwide, and in the community where papers are published and read.

So let me return to the diligent efforts of Dan Alexander. Dan is involved with Paper Chain, a combined effort of all free papers to help build the brand of free community papers. Paper Chain strives to present the free paper industry as the most persuasive, and locally relevant, print product that advertisers, and media buyers, can choose to help advertisers connect with customers. For papers with either editorial or 100% advertising content, free papers receive excellent audited scores for readership and response. In communities where free papers are distributed by mail, papers work closely with the Postal Service to provide advertisers and readers with a weekly source for shopping values. Most free papers devote a significant amount of unpaid space with each publication to community news, announcements, and other non-profit or charitable efforts. For John Draper, Paper Chain President, the opportunity to support Fisher House while

partnering with the Postal Service's promotion, was a win-win-win.

Draper liked the Fisher House opportunity, as it was a cause with connections throughout the country. The free paper industry works to push results in local, community markets. As one of its brand building, outreach efforts, Paper Chain values the opportunity to partner with charitable programs and to educate free paper publishers on opportunities, like the Postal promotion, to strengthen the free paper industry.

Draper credits Dan Alexander for doing the leg work to get a template ad and bar code for the promotion, and to make sure that publishers understood and could fulfill all USPS promotion program requirements.

The program rules for the Mail Drives Mobile Engagement incentive were designed to encourage mailers to drive consumers to complete an online transaction. Dan made the inquiry about designing an ad and program that could help readers make a contribution to Fisher House. Dan describes the Postal Service promotion office as being very helpful in answering his inquires and working to design a program where a true exchange of funds for a contribution was achieved. Dan says "they took the time to understand the promotion, and to help us explain to participants that wanted to register in advance how to meet program requirements."

Paper Chain communicated with its members to promote and describe the Postal Service promotion and an opportunity for publishers that mail to participate in communications to members, Paper Chain pointed out that donations of miles or hotel points would not qualify for the promotion at this time. A donation of money or another financial contribution, that could be confirmed by a receipt that Fisher House Foundation, Inc., would send my mail, was required.

(Cont.)

(Cont.) Paper Chain got to work in sharing information about the Mail Drives Mobile Engagement promotion with all publishers.

After describing the steps to participate in the Mail Drive Mobile Engagement promotion, Paper Chain provided some information about the Fisher House and the Postal Service:

The Fisher House has been serving our military families for 25 years with 66 facilities around the country, and in Europe, providing housing close to a loved one during hospitalization for an illness, disease, or injury. This USPS promotion provides Paper Chain publishers with an incentive to run the Fisher House ads and assist them in this very important mission.

Our delivery partner, the United States Postal Service, sees this mobile engagement promotion as an ideal way to further strengthen their market position in this ever challenging economy. Keeping our delivery partner well positioned to meet the technology changes, maintains our publications delivery method through this valuable vendor.

Dan has been running the Fisher House ads in every addition of his paper since the promotion period began. Dan pointed out some other win-win benefits of the promotion. He states our readers have seen the ads each week, and have learned about Fisher House and the valuable work it is doing. The savings the paper has received in postage, has helped the paper invest in inserting equipment to help expand its distribution business and strengthen its mailed community products. Dan is bullish on print and the free paper industry. "As the Dailys are pulling back, and doing less in full saturation coverage, insert and flyer customers are moving towards the free paper industry and the mail." Dan believes in the Postal Service. "In our rural market it surely is our partner. The Postal Service has been interested in our wellbeing and has worked with us. We hope this promotion is offered again in a way that we can help and support the Fisher House next year."

FISHER HOUSE FACTS

Donna E. Hanbery



I must confess, as the author of this column that I did not know about the Fisher House until Dan Alexander talked to me about ways to help the organization, and help free papers qualify for the USPS Mail Drives Mobile Engagement promotion. Until Dan helped me "get smart," I thought Fisher House had something to do with nuts.

Well nuts on me. I talked to Ashley Estill, Communications and Public Relations Coordinator for Fisher House Foundation, and learned about Fisher House and its mission.

Ashley is the one who told me about Loren Colburn, AFCP Executive Director, reaching out to help Fisher House Foundation when the Foundation stepped up to do the right thing, and provide military families the death benefits from their loved ones who made the ultimate sacrifice, during the Government shutdown. Ashley welcomed the opportunity to have more media and support from

community newspapers and shoppers, as most of the Fisher House support comes from the generosity of the American public. "We don't pay for advertising, we keep administrative costs low. It was great to have Loren volunteer with another way to help our mission." Ashley started the partnership with AFCP and the free paper industry in late 2013. Fisher House provided free papers with ads and a good story to tell about how individual contributions can go a long way. For contributions that come in through use of QR codes, Fisher House does a receipt for each donation. Fisher House is also a big user of the Postal Service with its magazine, The Patriot, mailed tax receipts to acknowledge contributions, and a large reliance on volunteer efforts that frequently include Postal workers.

Ashley stated that the need for helping our Veterans was growing. At the end of each year, Fisher House gets involved with the combined federal campaign, where federal employees have an opportunity to help and promote philanthropic causes. "We frequently get requests to speak at Post Offices and to talk to Postal employees. At these talks, a lot of hands are raised. We are always encouraged by the questions and volunteers that respond to our requests."

A little Fisher House history. Since 1990, over 250,000 families served. As of present, Fisher House will have 66 facilities located near major military and VA medical centers. Fisher House homes can accommodate 16 to 42 family members in a homey, and comfortable environment. Typical houses are 5,000 to 16,800 square feet, with a common kitchen, laundry facilities, spacious dining room, and living room with library and toys for children.

United States Postal Service®

INDUSTRYALERT

APPROVED 2016 PROMOTION CALENDAR

On December 10, 2015 the Postal Regulatory Commission issued Order No. 2861 approving the five proposed USPS Mailing Promotions for calendar year 2016. These promotions continue to build on the engagement strategies of the 2015 Promotions. The promotions focus on providing marketers with the opportunity to engage their customers by using dynamic color, new print techniques, mobile technology as well as traditional and innovative mail techniques. The promotions are designed to create excitement about mail, provide multiple opportunities for mailers to enhance the value of their mail and will offer incentives or discounts to mailers throughout 2016. Promotion highlights are as follows:

Promotion	Registration Period	Promotion Period
First-Class Mail Promotions:		
- Earned Value Reply Mail	Feb. 15 – March 31, 2016	April 1 – June 30, 2016
Personalized Color Transpromo	May 15 – Dec. 31, 2016	July 1 – Dec. 31, 2016
First-Class Mail & Standard Mail Promotion:		
- Emerging and Advanced Technology/Video In Print	Jan. 15 – Aug. 31, 2016	March 1 – August 31, 2016
Standard Mail Promotions:		
Tactile, Sensory & Interactive Mailpiece Engagement	Jan. 15 – Aug. 31, 2016	March 1 – August 31, 2016
Mobile Shopping	May 15 – Dec. 31, 2016	July 1 – December 31, 2016

Customers may find registration and promotion details on the RIBBS website under the Promotions & Incentive Programs for First-Class Mail & Standard Mail tab; postings on the website are scheduled to be available early next week. If you have any questions, please contact the Mailing Services Program Office at mailingpromotions@usps.gov.

3 Ways to Cure Holiday Overwhelm



By Dr. Joey Faucette
Raleigh, NC

Has your to-do list grown overnight?

Yes, it's "the most wonderful time of the year"...and yet many of us miss the wonder of it all due to the overwhelm at work that accompanies the holidays.

Here are 3 ways to cure your holiday overwhelm at work starting today:

Focus on Positive Strengths

From Madison Avenue to Your Street, you are shoved toward an impending sense of lack during the holidays. This scarcity mentality afflicts you at work as well, shifting your focus to the negative.

Today, make a list of what's going well with your business right now. Jot some notes about the strengths of 2015. Include percentage growth of revenue, significant product developments, additional team members, customer problems solved, and new referral relationships.

Begin your work day by reading over this list. This single strategy pivots your

mindset from negative—what I don't have—to positive—what we're doing well. Since you see what you're looking for, you will add to your list daily as you discover more positive strengths.

Focus on Positive Situations

Overwhelm produces anxiety which shuts down your strategic ability to focus on positive situations. You see Mt. Everest in its entirety instead of the first step that leads to the second step which gets you to the summit. Rather than focusing on what you can do, you shut down because you can't do it all at once.

Today, make a list of what you can do. Think of these as positive situations from which you leverage the kind of forward motion your business wants to reach your goals. Focus on this list and prioritize it. Pick one activity and do something to check it off. Keep building on the positive momentum you gain from this activity and move forward some more.

As you achieve more, your focus on these positive situations sharpens like a laser. You discover more positive situations and your attitude shifts from overwhelm to accomplishment.

Focus on Positive Signals

Overwhelm emerges during the holidays more as a reaction to the realization that the year is about to end than anything else. You reflect on what wasn't done, how little time you have left to do it, and the impending sense that it'll be undone as you begin 2016.

Honestly evaluate what you accomplished toward your 2013 goals now. Strategically act on the positive situations you can now using your positive strengths accrued through the year. Determine what barriers prevented further growth.

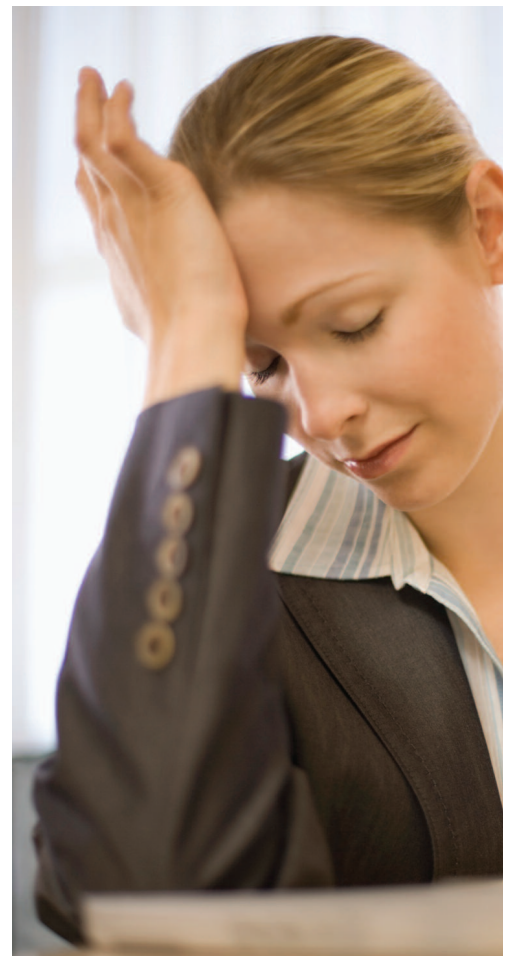
Then assess the positive signals emerging as 2015 nears completion that will serve

as your springboard to positive growth in 2016. What are the positive strengths? What are the positive situations? How do these project positive signals in 2016?

Focus on these positive signals to receive excited anticipation for the upcoming new year, cure your holiday overwhelm, and help you truly enjoy this most wonderful time of the year!

*Dr. Joey Faucette is the #1 best-selling author of *Work Positive in a Negative World* (Entrepreneur Press), *Positive Success Coach*, and speaker who helps business professionals increase sales with greater productivity so they get out of the office earlier to do what they love with those they love.*

Discover more at
www.GetPositive.Today.



YOUR SECRET Garden



by Joe Bonura , CSP

It Only Takes One

A colleague recently related that his monthly e-mail campaign was not working, that he was getting no measureable results from sending his article to over 300 people each month.

Passed Over

I told him that it takes only one response to change your life. Many years ago when I wanted to get into the advertising business, I applied for a job at a large New Orleans advertising agency. I was interviewed by Roy Shwartz who wanted to hire me as a copywriter, but he was overruled by his creative director. I was devastated but kept in touch with Roy on a consistent basis.

Lacked Experience

At that same time, I applied at several other advertising agencies in New Orleans and received a similar response. Fessel, Siegfriedt, and Moeller, based in Louisville, Kentucky with a branch in New Orleans, wrote to me that I lacked the experience required for a position. They were right.

He Remembered

One year later, when Ed Martin became

the New Orleans district manager of the Hotpoint Division of General Electric, he was looking to hire an advertising manager, so he called many of the local advertising agencies for recommendations. When he spoke to Roy Schwartz, Roy remembered me and recommended that Ed speak with me.

Never Wasted

Ed interviewed me and gave me the job as the advertising manager of his district. The seed that I had planted with Roy was not wasted. We never know which seed we plant will yield the biggest dividend. That one seed changed my life forever and enabled me to continue to pursue my career in the world of advertising.

Let It Grow
Let It Grow
Let It Grow

Moved To Louisville

I worked for General Electric in New Orleans for five years. When Ed Martin became national advertising manager for General Electric in Louisville, he promoted me to a national advertising specialist, and I worked in that position for two years.

In The Incubator

I had a goal to open my own advertising agency by the time I was 30 years old. It

was a goal that I had set when I was 20 years old. By the time I was 27 I then had experience as a media representative, a district advertising manager for a major company, and a national advertising specialist. The only piece to the puzzle that was missing was advertising agency experience. Another seed that I had planted started to bloom: Fessel, Siegfriedt, and Moeller (FS&M) was located in Louisville, so I applied with them. In my resume, I reminded them that I applied for a job with their agency seven years ago and was passed over because I had no experience. I listed and explained my experience in those seven years.

You're Hired

FS&M hired me as an account executive, and after working for them for three years, I fulfilled my goal and opened Bon Advertising Agency. By the time I retired from the advertising business in 1989, Bon Advertising had become the second largest advertising agency in Louisville, Kentucky.

No Coincidences

I still marvel at how the seeds that I planted as a young man turned into my garden of life. Initially, those seeds looked like wasted effort, but through time and patience, they became my career.

Your Harvest Will Come

Keep planting. You don't know when your time of harvest will come, but if your efforts are consistent, you water and feed your garden, your harvest will surely blossom.

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Who does it right? In 2015, I visited a lot of Successful Papers



Kevin Slimp
The News Guru

I've been training and advising newspapers for 21 years, every since Larry Smith asked me to come look over his operation in LaFollette, Tennessee back in 1994. I worked with more than 100 papers in my travels this year, not counting the thousands of papers that attended conferences and training events I led.

That's a lot of years and a lot of papers, and in that time I've come to recognize the traits that correlate with success. I don't have to spend very long at a newspaper office to tell you how they're doing in terms of circulation, readership, ad sales and profits. No one has to tell me. There are qualities that lead to successful newspapers, and without them it's a good bet that there are some problems in one or more of those four areas.

I could have listed fifty newspapers in this column, because I ran into a lot of papers that are doing things right in 2015. And it's showing in their numbers. Due to space limitations, here are a few that stood out in my memory:

The Community News & The Wellington Advertiser: Fergus, Ontario

I spent two days with the staff of this community paper located 45 minutes from Toronto. It didn't take me long to realize that this group does a lot right.

Dave Adsett is one of my heroes. Cutting isn't in his vocabulary, and while other papers in his area have cut pages and staff, leading to decreasing circulation, Dave's papers have done the opposite, with the opposite results.

Here's what Dave told me: "We make a good living and are interested in the long game, rather than managing by a month or quarter. We have also continued to hire staff and grow our business, as opposed to making cuts to achieve bottom line results."

The Standard Banner: Jefferson City, Tennessee

"The work ethic of our staff and their dedication to excellence are the two keys to our success," Dale Gentry told me, as we discussed the secrets to his newspaper's success. "We work hard to cover, and serve, our community well - whether it's in the quality of our writing and photography, the effectiveness of our ads, the excellence of our final printed product,

or the service we provide to readers and customers."

The Piedmont Shopper: Danville, Virginia

I got to know the folks in Danville after receiving a frantic call about ads printing wrong. It took a little geographic magic, but I made the six-hour journey to Danville on my way to Minneapolis, where I was speaking the next day at a convention.

Kathy Crumpton is the publishers of The Piedmont Shopper. She explains their success like this: "Over the past 15 years, we've been blessed to establish relationships with our readers and advertisers that go beyond newsprint. That relationship with our community led us to see the need for our other publications: a monthly paper delivered to all public and private schools, free to the students and staff, and Red Bird Times, which serves the other end of our readership spectrum, and is enjoyed by seniors 50 and "wiser." No matter which of our publications you pick up, you'll find the same commitment to serving our community."

Hmm. I'm starting to notice a trend among successful newspapers with that "serving community" thing.

Sauk Centre Herald: Sauk Centre, Minnesota

I considered several newspapers in Minnesota for this column, but limited myself to two. One is the Sauk Centre Herald. You might remember the column I wrote about my experience with Dave's staff while visiting in November.

Dave had this to say about the Herald: "Respect is a key word for us: Respect for readers, advertisers, staff and competitors. We've always embraced technology and innovation. We try to tell the human drama which can be many things from tragic deaths to losing the state high school basketball game to funny stories from an old timer or a hog that escaped the meat packing plant and ran down Main Street.

Dave's staff is larger than many daily papers I visit, and the payoff is in seen in their success. Large readership base, quality journalism and success in the bottom line.

That seems to be another quality that correlates with success at newspapers: Rather than cutting staff to the bone, they seem to maintain their staffs, leading to greater readership and ad sales.

Hood County News: Granbury, Texas

Every so often, I'm invited to visit Granbury, Texas, a town of roughly 10,000 folks located just southwest of Fort Worth.

It was in Granbury that I trained the first newspapers outside of Tennessee to use the PDF method to print their pages 20 years ago.

It's no surprise that newspapers like Hood County News are successful. As you walk throughout the building, you sense the pride the staff takes in putting out a good newspaper. It's local. All local.

Publisher Jerry Tidwell has always believed in quality, and brings in trainers and experts on a regular basis. It shows. Unlike some papers, the building isn't near-empty. There's a lot going on. And it all starts with the publisher.

Interesting. That's another quality that seems to correlate with successful papers: An engaged publisher who knows and cares about his/her community and staff.

Kanabec County Times: Mora, Minnesota

I've liked Wade Weber, publisher, since I first met him years ago, when he invited me to train the staffs of his papers in Central Minnesota. Since then, his papers have grown, and so have his staffs. In addition to his paper in Mora, Wade has publications in Pine City, Cambridge, White Bear Lake and Grantsburg, as well as the Amery Free Press in Northwestern Wisconsin.

There's no feel of "centralization" in Wade's papers. He told me, "Even though we are a group of newspapers, each location focuses on its own community. We are very focused on being local, in both advertising and in news content."

Hmm. There's that "local" thing again. I'm starting to believe that really does make a difference.

I could have mentioned so many other papers. *The Akron (Iowa) Hometown*, for example, or the *Cresco (Iowa) Shopper*. I wouldn't normally mention a pure shopper in my list, but Peggy and John Loveless keep a real community focus to their publication. As John told me about a major national newspaper group that offered him a tidy sum for his paper, I was so inspired when he said, "I didn't want it to lose the community feel."

I was also inspired in 2015 by a new generation of publishers and newspapers. Mark Fortune comes to mind, starting a successful new weekly in Ohio. There's Michelle Van Hee, who publishes the newspaper in Madelia, Minnesota. The list could go on.

There are a lot of newspapers out there doing things right. Due to space limitations, I'll stop there. But believe me, this list could go on for several pages.



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