



Community Papers of Michigan

INFORMER

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mifreeads.com

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OUR DATA SPEAKS VOLUMES



Your Readers Are A Great Story

Tell Your Story

Media buyers see your publication...But they buy your audience.

Your audience is the compelling story behind your value...Too often that story goes untold.



Before media decision makers buy your audience, they want to know:

- Who are they?
- How do they interact with your product?
- And most importantly...what are they buying?

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IFPA members win buying decisions with cutting-edge audience research conducted by a nationally recognized authority Circulation Verification Council (CVC). *

Your IFPA member benefits include a fully funded local research project in your community documenting your audience demographics and purchase intentions for your print and digital products.



Tell your story—the story of your audience and your market—with credible third-party data from source that media buyers accept and understand.

* Included With IFPA Membership

** Elective Option Available To Members

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Industry experts through IFPA-branded conferences, workshops, webinars and publications deliver training that is the core of IFPA tradition.

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An Alliance of Independent Community Publishers

The Real World Of Advertising Sales



By **Bob Berting**
Berting Communications

In spite of all the current trends about sales training programs that feature behavior modification techniques, enhanced communication skills, progressive questioning with high impact interviewing, there remains some basic truths about the real world of advertising sales.

First let's talk about customer realities. There are three things that customers want before they will commit to a long range advertising program:

1. To trust and believe the advertising salesperson. There are 3 questions that the customer has : Will they always follow up on every statement that promises action? Is he or she knowledgeable? Is he or she creative?

2. To have a well planned and executed advertising campaign or program. If your publication is to be the major player in their media mix, they must have a realistic and comprehensive plan for them.

3. To have complete confidence in the publication. If they are to have an on-going campaign or program, they can't

have lingering doubts about the professionalism of the salesperson, the paper's penetration in the market, and readership/response factors. They must have continual reassurance and updates on these critical points.

4 Requirements For Advertising Salespeople

- The salesperson has to be a trusted advisor and counselor. They must do more research (internet) before every new prospect appointment and not get in the habit of saying "tell me all about your business."

- Know competitive media. How can a contract for a campaign or long range program be sold if a prospect doesn't think the paper will be a key player in their media mix? Every newspaper advertising salesperson has to be able to show decisively why their paper should be the "lead singer" in any media mix singing group.

- Know layout and copy backwards and forwards. The salesperson must be able to explain typefaces, selection of headings, overall ad design, copy outlines, and above all, how the flow of ads will make an extremely effective ad campaign or program.

- Sell long range programs. Ask the customer for all the reasons people buy from them.

These reasons are then transformed into ad headlines and eye-catching elements that attract the reader to the ad. Then along with creative body copy, tell the story of the business on a consistent, repetitive basis

In the real world of advertising sales, many publications fall into these categories:

Sausage Grinder

This publication pushes immediate income and has their salespeople push one time promotions and bring ads in on a crash basis. Their salespeople are perceived as order takers. All activity is on a treadmill and there is a great deal of stress and turn over on the sales staff. The publication lives from week to week.

Stepping Stone

This publication is obsessed with designing beautiful specialty tabloid covers and ads that are works of art. Since the emphasis is on ultra-creative ad design, there could be a lack of attention to content of campaigns and long range programs. Response to ads could be diminished.

Pro-Principle

This sales staff is highly trained to be advertising professionals. Their customers are committed to long range programs because they perceive their salespeople as trusted advisors who want to tell the story of their business in a creative, thoughtful, and purposeful way. The customers are committed to the publication as a major player in their media mix strategy.

Bob Berting is a professional speaker, advertising sales trainer and publisher marketing consultant who has conducted over 1500 live seminars, tele-seminars and webinars for newspaper sales staffs, their customers, and print media associations in the U.S. and Canada. His newest offer for the newspaper industry is a package of his two e-books " Dynamic Advertising Sales and Image Power" and "Advanced Selling Skills For The Advertising Sales Pro". Both books can be ordered on his website www.bobberting.com individually for 19.95 or both for 35.00. Contact Bob at bob@bobberting.com or 800-536- 5408. He is located at 6330 Woburn Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46250.

Graphics come in many flavors, photos, clip art —both bit-map and vector, detailed or simple. But a very effective graphic can be a simple...

Silhouette



Silhouettes on the page... to modify the Herman's Hermits "Silhouettes on the Wall" tune from waaaaay back when got me to thinking. That and an article from "Before and After" (when there was still a *Before and After* website) regarding the use of silhouettes for desktop holiday cards. I have used silhouettes as attention-getting devices in my ads— simple shapes can get an idea across faster than more complex shapes!

Silhouettes are especially helpful in small space ads because they are simple and recognizable in the blink of an eye...which is what you are looking for when designing for a printed page with a lot of other ads competing for "attention."

I had done articles on silhouettes before, but I have uncovered even more, so thought I would share these with you. I will revise some of my previous articles and present them at a later date.

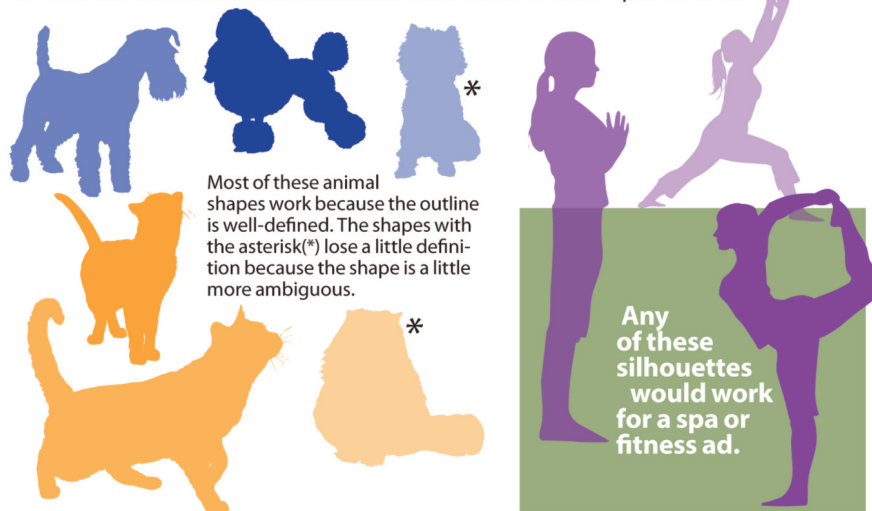
The samples on the right have run in the various Booster publications for many years. They work well as headings for the regular columns because they are clean, simple and the art supports the text...in other words they stand out from the other ads. The simple silhouette is easily recognized by the reader. If we would have used "detailed" artwork, the effect would not be as striking, especially since we are working in a very small space and more lines (details) would start to look "busy."

The article from *Before and After* led me to a web site: all-silhouettes.com. The info said they were "the largest, online collection of free vector silhouettes. Most of presented silhouettes are free for personal and commercial purposes (see license information for each pack for more details)." Most of the silhouette clip art contain two vector formats: *AI (Adobe Illustrator 8)* and *CSH (Adobe Photoshop custom shapes)* so they are easy to use in a vector editing application. For the most part, they are free, so why not try them, but free isn't always good. Some are better than others—so be "pickier."

The silhouettes I use the most have been collected over a number of years. Sometimes they were part of a typeface (an example is listed below), sometimes they were part of an art service I subscribed to at one time, *PhotoSpin*, and sometimes they were part of a collection or package. I picked a few that I thought would lend themselves to small space (or even large) ads and some ideas for incorporating them into your designs.

Look for shapes that have clear, defined silhouette details

Just because there are no specific details in a silhouette doesn't mean that all of them work well. One thing to keep in mind is the shape of the silhouette...some will work better than others. Look for silhouettes that show a side or three-quarter view.



Most of these animal shapes work because the outline is well-defined. The shapes with the asterisk(*) lose a little definition because the shape is a little more ambiguous.

Any of these silhouettes would work for a spa or fitness ad.



Sell your stuff
in the Booster classifieds
Hartford • 673-2900 | West Bend 334-5899



Buy some stuff
in the Booster classifieds
Hartford • 673-2900 | West Bend 334-5899



Around the House
SERVICES AND IMPROVEMENTS

healthview 
CONCERNING YOUR WELL BEING

HEADINGS IN THE BOOSTER HELP CREATE AN IDENTITY FOR REGULAR GROUPINGS IN THE PAPER.

Let it snow, let it snow

I'm sure that some of you have already worked with silhouettes. A lot of snowflakes are silhouettes—they work well in an ad because you can vary the size, or even use just a part of the artwork. The best shapes are the ones that we are most familiar with.



Other sources

There are also typefaces that come with vector files. *House Industries Comprimé* has some interesting silhouettes. Look familiar?



And there are art services that sell vector silhouettes—complete with drop shadows!

I will leave you with my latest silhouette download from all-silhouettes.com

Happy Saint Patrick's Day!

I write for *The Independent Publisher*, *SAPAtoday* as well as *CPM*. If you want more info, PDFs of any articles, or have ideas, e-mail: hanrahan.in@att.net Ellen Hanrahan ©2016



Kevin Slimp
The News Guru

Close to home

Health of newspaper largely depends on ownership model

kevin@kevinslimp.com

It sounds like the beginning of a bad joke: "What do you get when you gather 760 newspaper executives and ask them how things are going at their papers?"

That's just what I did in late January, and a few of their answers came as a surprise to me. Continuing a practice begun in late 2014, I contacted newspaper publishers, CEOs, owners and other top management throughout the U.S. and Canada to get information about the state of their newspapers. After a week, I've received just shy of 800 responses. I suspect that number will increase even more by the time I finish summarizing all the information.

It's an arduous task, compiling and going through this much data. In the time it took to write those first two paragraphs, three more publishers responded. By the time I finish writing this column, a few more will arrive.

Truth is, after about 300 responses, it is clear what the results are going to be. Answers don't change much after that. So with nearly 800 responses, it's safe to say we have a good idea what is happening in the industry on this day in February 2016.

Interestingly, this particular survey had the best response of any I've conducted. Papers of all sizes and types are represented in statistically reliable numbers. There are plenty of metro dailies, as well as tiny weeklies, and everything in between. Even a few monthly and online-only publications took part.

The most responses came from the Midwest and Southeast United States, in nearly identical numbers, which is usually the case. Very few responses came from Eastern Canada. It's also interesting that newspapers in the Midwest and Southeast U.S. appear to be the healthiest, which may (or may not) be an indication of why there are more papers in those areas.

One of the most interesting aspects of conducting these surveys is the

ability to break the numbers up in a variety of ways. For instance, I can tell you how advertising sales at metro papers on the West Coast compare to those at independently owned weekly papers in Texas.

It's fascinating to speak at a association convention and share how their papers compare to newspapers in other areas. It's even more interesting to see how different types of papers in the same area are doing, based on their size, ownership and other variables.

I knew that newspapers were doing well overall. I just didn't know how well. As with other places I've visited recently, publishers I spoke with at a Michigan conference this past weekend shared that they were having very good years and their numbers are steady or growing. I visited with owners of free papers, paid circulation papers, community papers, collegiate newspapers, daily papers and weeklies. I spoke with several publishers who had started new papers that are doing quite well. It was inspiring to hear their stories.

I planned to deliver an overview of this survey, so you could see for yourself how papers are doing in North America. However, I was struck by the results of one question and would like to spend the rest of this column sharing those responses with you.

The question: "Compared to three years ago, how would you describe the overall health of your primary publication(s)?"

My interest was peaked when I took screenshots of responses to that lone question, based on the types of newspapers.

By sheer coincidence, I laid out the various responses by group on my screen. The groups included:

- Independent newspapers, locally owned and operated
- Part of small group (2 to 5 papers)

- Part of a mid-size group (6 to 20 papers), but act much like an independent paper with most of the work done locally
- Part of a mid-size group, with much of their work directed or done at a central location
- Part of a large regional group (20 or more papers in one geographical region)
- Part of a large national group, covering more than one geographical area of the country

While 26 percent of newspapers affiliated with large national groups and 21 percent of those in large regional groups indicated better health than three years ago, that number, represented by a green bar on my screen, increased as the newspapers indicated more local control:

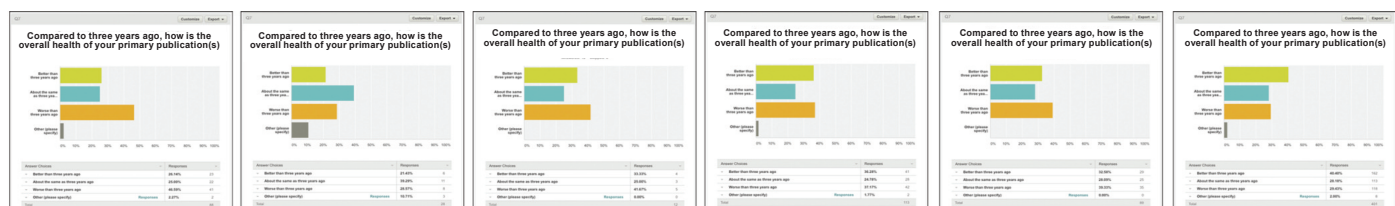
- 26 percent: Large National Group
- 21 percent: Large Regional Group
- 33 percent: Mid-size Group with Central Control
- 36 percent: Mid-size Group with Local Control
- 40 percent: Independent with Local Owner

With almost 800 responses so far, it seems that newspapers locally owned and operated are almost twice as likely to have experienced improved health over the past three years, compared to large regional groups. It seems, as the control of the newspaper gets closer to home, so do improvements in its health.

These findings are still preliminary and it's almost guaranteed that there will be plenty of surprises awaiting me as I dig through the numbers over the next few weeks.

One thing is clear: Newspapers are doing better than they were a few years ago, and most are feeling good about the future. We seem to have turned a corner and numbers indicated a solid future ahead.

Did you know that Kevin's fictional weekly column has 2 million readers in print each week?



The top bar represents percentage of papers in each group that indicate improved health over the past three years.

OVERCOMING OBJECTIONS



by Joe Bonura, CSP

The List Goes On

"Your price is too high!"

"I have to speak with my spouse!"

"I need time to think about it!"

"I will let you know in a few days!"

The list goes on and on and on. So how do you handle an objection?

IT IS SIMPLE REALLY

If you approach the overall sales process correctly, the job of overcoming an objection is a simple process. I always begin a call with the intention of building rapport. When calling on a health insurance prospect, as soon as we entered the house, I noticed a collection of clown statues, clown paintings, and a photo of a gentleman in a clown costume.

CLOWN AROUND

I discovered the woman's husband liked clowns and that he was a weekend clown at children's parties. I found the subject fascinating, and we spoke about it for several minutes. I transitioned to the purpose of my call by asking, "Why are we here; why did you agree to visit with us?"

THERE ARE NO DUMB QUESTIONS

The sales person, who had accompanied me, was visibly shaken that I would ask

such a dumb question. The prospect gave me the obvious answer that I had hoped for, "Because I would like to look at the possibility of health insurance." My next question was, "I know that, but why Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield?" She went on to explain that she was an admittance nurse at a local hospital, and that when someone showed her the "Blue Card," it meant something special.

WORTH THE DIFFERENCE

Later in the process, when I gave her our quote, she commented that we were higher in monthly premium than a competitor. She needed some time to think about whether we were worth the difference in cost. I immediately reminded her how she felt as an admittance nurse when someone showed her the "Blue Card." She said, "You are right; I guess I will go with Anthem."

THE BEGINNING IS THE END

I had actually handled the objection at the beginning of my presentation, not at the end when the objection was raised. If you know what your most common objections might be, begin your presentation by answering the objections up front and using that argument to close in on the answer when the objection rears its ugly head.

IT IS NEVER TOO LATE

On another occasion with an Anthem agent, we called on a pet store. The owner apologized that a competitive insurance agent had called on him, and he had already signed up with him. He did not want to go through the whole process again. I thanked him for his candor and immediately started to talk about my dog Muffin. After building rapport, I found out that he would be paying \$20.00 a month more with our competitor. In spite of that, he insisted that the hassle of changing was not worth the twenty dollars a month difference in premium.

CREATE A VISUAL

We were about to say our goodbyes when I reached for a box of doggie biscuits. I told him I wanted to bring them home to Muffin. I asked him how much he made on each box of biscuits that he sold, and he replied \$2.00. I countered, "So what you are telling me is that in order for you to pay the additional \$20.00 a month in insurance costs, ten additional customers a month need to come in and buy a box of these biscuits?" By creating a visual picture, I made him think in a totally different way and convinced him to go with Anthem. We walked out with a contract.

DIG DEEPER

Dig deeper and find out what the real objection is before you give up and hit the road. Don't wait until the horse is out of the barn before you close the door. Selling is a three-dimensional process and not a one size fits all solution.

ABOUT JOE BONURA

His background is unique. Joe owned and operated a highly successful advertising agency for 18 years. During that time, he found his advertising campaigns were more effective when he educated his clients in the areas of sales and service. He conducted training seminars for his clients as added value. Word spread that Joe was a quality speaker, and more and more people asked him to speak. The demand became so high that he sold the agency to three of his associates to start his own speaking and consulting company, Bonura Business Development Group, Inc. Joe is past President of the Kentucky Speakers Association, served on the National Speakers Association Board of Directors for five years, and is a Certified Speaking Professional (CSP), a prestigious designation earned by only 8% of the 3,600 member National Speakers Association.

Joe Bonura & Associates, Inc.
407 Landis Lakes Court
Louisville, KY 40245
(800) 444-3340 toll free
joe@bonura.com

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RATES TO ROLL BACK ON APRIL 10, 2016



Donna Hanbery
*Executive Director of Saturation
Mailers Coalition*

33 South 6th Street
Suite 4160
Minneapolis, MN 55402
(612) 340-9855
(612) 340-9446/fax

The USPS has filed the notice it is required to file by the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) decision in the exigency case to announce that postal rates will "rollback" on April 10, 2016.

Previous to this official filing, the USPS had released detailed rate information to all mailers about the "rollback rates" that will go into effect when the USPS has recovered all of the revenue the PRC found it was entitled to recoup "due to" the Great Recession and to collect with the 4.3% exigency increase that has been added to all Market Dominant postal rates. The Postal Service announced, absent Congressional or Court Action to make the existing exigent surcharge for Market Dominant Products and Services part of the rate base or to otherwise extend it, that the Postal Service would provide notice of the rollback date to the PRC at least 45 days before the exigent surcharge revenue target is reached. The USPS posted on its RIBBS website charts that show all of the rollback rates. The Postal Service PRC filing,

announcement, and posting of the rollback rates, is all required by existing order of the PRC. The Postal Service would still like to see some legislation passed before the "rollback" date to permit it to keep the exigency surcharge in place. In a USPS Release accompanying the announcement, Postmaster General Megan Brennan said "removing the surcharge and reducing our prices is an irrational outcome considering the Postal Service's precarious financial condition."

The USPS, the President's budget, and some mailers and associations have supported a continuation of the exigent surcharge as part of a potential postal reform package that would help stabilize Postal Service finances. Such a proposal was in the President's budget and is in the Ipost bill introduced by Senator Carper. The USPS has also continued its exigency appeal challenging the last round of proceedings before the PRC. But in this contentious Congressional environment, and election year, and in light of the extensive court proceedings and rulings that have already taken place, the likelihood of Congressional or court action to continue the exigent surcharge seems remote.

A chart accompanies this article has been reprinted with permission of PostCom, the Association of Postal Commerce, of the rates for Enhanced Carrier Route Flats sent as High Density (TMC) Mail or Saturation Mail Flats. These are the rate categories used most frequently by free paper publishers that use the mail for all or part of their circulation. The rate category referred to as EDDM ECR Flats - Saturation refers to Saturation Mail pieces sent with the simplified address format, and as commercial mail where the mailer has a mailing permit. (These are not the rates for EDDM Retail where a business

owner can enter smaller quantities of unaddressed saturation mail at a local postal office without a permit). SMC is a member of PostCom and thanks that organization for the permission to share this information and this helpful chart with our members.

So what is ahead for postal rates? With CPI continuing to be exceptionally low, it is not anticipated that there will be a rate change until January 2017. Under the current law governing the USPS, the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act, postal rate increases have been limited to adjustments within the cpi rate cap, except for extraordinary or exigent circumstances. In 2017, after the exigent 10 year anniversary of the law, the PRC is charged with conducting a "Rate Review" to determine how the rate setting process has worked. Although most mailers applaud the Rate Cap as a PAEA protection that has stabilized postal prices for monopoly products and encouraged the USPS to cut costs and right size its network, the USPS and postal labor have made it clear that they want to bust the cap. Brennan said "Our current pricing regime is unworkable and should be replaced with a system that provides greater pricing flexibility and better reflects the economic challenges facing the Postal Service."

Mailers and other USPS stakeholders believe the problems the USPS faces are not due to the rate cap but unworkable and unfair government imposed mandates relating to health care costs and prefunding, overpayment of retirement costs, and other burdens that could be fixed with postal reforms that do not unfairly and unreasonably burden mailers, and put the USPS and the federal government at risk of losing more of the postal rate paying customers that fund the USPS. *(Continued on page 9)*

RATES TO ROLLBACK ON APRIL 10, 2016

Continued from page 8

Some mailers and associations, including SMC, have advanced an idea, to be included as part of an overall postal reform package, of a rate proposal that would give the Postal Service some additional revenue (beyond what is permitted by CPI) to help the USPS with its financial challenges. The willingness of mailers and industry to accept a higher than CPI rate is conditioned, however, on other Congressional action that would postpone the 10 year rate review one year to 2018, and would give mailers the certainty of two years of rate stability. This rate proposal would be

part of a comprehensive postal reform package that would give the USPS the restructuring changes it needs to amortize health care obligations over a longer period of time, would allow the USPS and its employees to take advantage of Medicare participation (currently USPS employees pay for Medicare but do not participate in the plan), would give the Postal Service a right to refunds for overpayments to its retirement plans, and would make other changes that would improve the long-term health and stability of the USPS. As of the writing of this column, this

proposal is still in the discussion stage. But it is an effort by mailers that opposed exigency, to try and meet the Postal Service part way on its financial challenges, but to also give the industry and the Postal Service some breathing room to adjust to changes that might be in an overall reform law, and to complete studies that would be required by the law, before the PRC begins its rate review process. But as of this writing, the prospects of comprehensive postal reform in the short-term, or long-term, during an election year remain uncertain.

Regular Standard Mail Flats Postage Rates-Enhanced Carrier Route Exigency Surcharge Rollback (Potential Implementation April 2016)

(All Rates Shown In Cents)

SUBCLASS/ Rate Category	For Pieces Weighing 3.3 Ounces or Less				Current Rates		New Rates	
	Current Rate	New Rate	% Difference	Amount Difference	Per Piece	PLUS Per Pound	Per Piece	PLUS Per Pound
ECR FLATS High Density/1	24.5	23.5	(4.1)%	(1.0)	11.3	64.1	10.8	61.5
NDC Entry	21.1	20.2	(4.3)%	(0.9)	11.3	47.3	10.8	45.4
SCF Entry	20.1	19.2	(4.5)%	(0.9)	11.3	42.3	10.8	40.6
Delivery Unit Entry	19.1	18.3	(4.2)%	(0.8)	11.3	37.8	10.8	36.3
ECR FLATS-High Density Plus	24.0	23.0	(4.2)%	(1.0)	8.8	64.1	8.4	61.5
NDC Entry	20.6	19.7	(4.4)%	(0.9)	8.8	47.3	8.4	45.4
SCF Entry	19.6	18.7	(4.6)%	(0.9)	8.8	42.3	8.4	40.6
Delivery Unit Entry	18.6	17.8	(4.3)%	(0.8)	8.8	37.8	8.4	36.3
ECR FLATS-Saturation	21.4	20.5	(4.2)%	(0.9)	8.1	64.1	7.8	61.5
NDC Entry	17.9	17.2	(3.9)%	(0.7)	8.1	47.3	7.8	45.4
SCF Entry	16.9	16.2	(4.1)%	(0.7)	8.1	42.3	7.8	40.6
Delivery Unit Entry	15.9	15.3	(3.8)%	(0.6)	8.1	37.8	7.8	36.3
EDDM ECR FLATS-Saturation	21.5	20.6	(4.2)%	(0.9)	8.2	64.1	7.9	61.5
NDC Entry	18.0	17.3	(3.9)%	(0.7)	8.2	47.3	7.9	45.4
SCF Entry	17.0	16.3	(4.1)%	(0.7)	8.2	42.3	7.9	40.6
Delivery Unit Entry	16.0	15.4	(3.8)%	(0.6)	8.2	37.8	7.9	36.3

* Add \$0.035 (currently \$0.036) for each piece addressed using a Detached Address Label with no advertising or a Detached Address Label containing advertising (Detached Marketing Label).

5 Secret Steps to Take in Response to Change



By Dr. Joey Faucette
Raleigh, NC

I live in a part of the U.S. that received more than usual snowfall this month, rearranging untold numbers of meetings and assignments.

At least snow is forecast, right?

What about other changes that assail your work daily?

Not forecasted, right?

How you deal with today's inevitable changes determines your positive success at work.

Here are five secret steps that successful Work Positive business people take in response to daily change:

Relax

When sudden change interrupts your work flow, your fight-or-flight response to stress emerges just as quickly. You will go thermonuclear or turbodrive away due to an overwhelming sense of powerlessness.

Work Positive business people first relax. They take a breath and see the moment as it is—a moment. They resist the urge to go Incredible Hulk or Chicken Little and focus on the positive in that moment.

Relate

Work Positive professionals secondly relate. They quickly turn to others and invest in their social circles. They offer support and gain strength from relationships, putting a face to the moment in the midst of change.

Once you relax, your focus shifts from “me” to “we.” You relate to and invest in others.

Remember

Next, Work Positive business people succeed as they look behind the moment to similar past times. They reflect on what they implemented that worked. They gather courage and strength from the knowledge that they survived and are still in business today. Such emotional fortitude energizes them to deal strategically with the moment.

Everyone has a survival story. Such tales willingly suspend your disbelief in the moment and propel you forward.

Respond

Having relaxed, related, and remembered, Work Positive professionals now choose to respond. Interestingly, the temptation is to first respond. Success builds from well-chosen inner steps before it emerges in outer steps.

The focusing question behind your response is, “What can I do?” The powerlessness of rapid change paralyzes with a myopic view of “What I Can't Do.” There is always some sliver of an opportunity open to successful people. They see what they look for. Seizing the moment, they respond with creative imagination and transform the paralysis into a powerful rewriting of the script.

Reward

Finally, successful Work Positive business people reward themselves. They take off earlier than usual to play in the snow and other delightful experiences.

Also, they reward others. They gift the team member who went the extra mile for a client.

Rewards recognize the importance of others to the success of the business. This secret step may be the greatest of all as it hooks the team member's emotional engagement in a most personal way—if you insure that the reward is given in response to the team member's desires, rather than your own. Work Positive professionals lead from heartfelt recognition, acknowledging it takes a team to navigate the white water of rapid change.

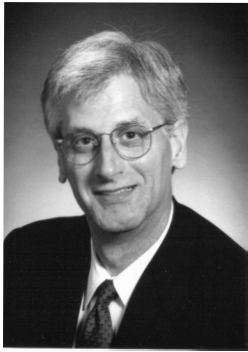
Change happens daily.

Implement these five secret steps of the positively successful and Work Positive!

Dr. Joey Faucette is the #1 best-selling author of Work Positive in a Negative World (Entrepreneur Press), Positive Success Coach, & 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.



Say “I do” To The Creative Process



By John Foust
Raleigh, NC

In my Advertising is a business which is fueled by creativity. Once you get a handle on how to get ideas – ideas that work – you’ll have a big advantage over the competition.

No matter how much you sell, it all comes down to how much your ads will sell. When the ads get results, your advertisers will be happy. And when they’re happy, they’ll keep running ads.

If you’ve ever recycled old ideas because you couldn’t think of anything better, maybe it’s time for a new approach. One way to generate ideas is to look elsewhere for a spark. For example, my wife and I recently went to a wedding.

Along the way, she mentioned the old British rhyme about things that a bride is supposed to wear: “Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue.” A saying as simple as that could provide the starting point for a new advertising idea. Let’s take a look:

Something old: Think history. If an

advertiser has been in business for a number of years, that can give you plenty of inspiration. You can use vintage photographs from their files to demonstrate a sense of tradition and stability. You can feature a side-by-side comparison of their first building and their current building. (“Look how we’ve grown. And it’s all because we have a commitment to our customers.”) You can even feature a quote from the company’s founder – with a tie-in to their continuing business philosophy.

Something new: Although the words “new and improved” have become an advertising

of operation? Is there new management?

If you use this technique, be sure to show how the new things are better than the old ones. Emphasize benefits.

Something borrowed: Why not find someone else to speak for your advertiser? A testimonial from a real life customer can be a powerful advertising message.

A testimonial adds a couple of important elements to an ad campaign. First, by featuring someone who represents the advertiser’s target audience, a testimonial can help consumers identify with the company. Second, a customer can say things that wouldn’t be believed if the advertiser said those same things. (“Their widgets are great” has more weight than “Our widgets are great.”)

Something blue: Consumers get the blues. They have problems that need solving. Can your advertiser reduce energy bills? Or help improve students’ grades? Or take the hassle out of building a custom home? Show people how your advertiser can solve a specific problem, and they will pay attention to the message.

This approach to creativity can be seen as a two-step process. First, get inside information about your advertisers, their products, their services and their customers. Then look for idea sparks from outside sources.

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



cliché, the general concept has been around for a long time, because it is effective. Consumers like newness – as long as it’s relevant.

What is new with your advertisers? Do they have new products? Have new features been added to old products? Do they have new services? New locations? New hours



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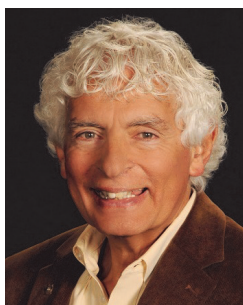
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