

December **2025**
INFORMER



Merry Christmas
& Happy New Year



Community
Papers of
Michigan



We Made It Through 2025 – What Does 2026 Hold?

From Executive Director Don Rush

“Holy, Holy, Holy – merciful and mighty!” It’s the middle of December 2025, and with that, Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and Season’s Salutations to one and all!

As the year comes to a close, I wanted to report that Community Papers of Michigan (CPM) was able to give back to membership \$172,907.48 (as of Dec. 9). This revenue comes from the sale of our statewide classified network, MegaMarket, Run Of Press (ROP) display ads, and Preprint Inserts into community papers. CPM’s commission on inserts is 10 percent; 15 percent on ROP advertising; and we keep 100 percent of all MegaMarket classifieds we sell.

MegaMarket: A Priceless Marketing Tool

Speaking of MegaMarket classifieds, here are a few testimonials about this program from those who make it a part of their marketing budget:

• John Peck: *“The Mega Market has been a good marketing tool and complement to our overall advertising strategy. The cost is affordable for the reach it has. Don does a very good job reminding us on deadlines. He is very helpful and easy to work with.”*

• Kenny Lindsay: *“MegaMarkets shouldn’t be, but it’s one of the best kept secrets in auction marketing in Michigan. When we use the classified ad feature... we always attract key bidders. We never know where our next buyer is coming from, and for the cost, MegaMarkets is priceless.”*

• Leigh Narhi: *“Community Papers of Michigan takes the hard work out of placing newspaper ads, and they GET RESULTS. In a digital world that changes by the minute, Community Papers proves something every auctioneer should remember: People still read the paper, and print still pulls bidders. If you’re not using Community Papers, you’re not maximizing exposure for your seller.”*

• Craig Miller: *“I’ve been using the Community Papers of Michigan’s MegaMarket network for my auction advertising for several years now, and the results have been outstanding. For only \$229, getting exposure in community newspapers plus their online classified site is money well spent. My representative, Don Rush, goes above and beyond—he keeps me on track with reminders, offers helpful suggestions for upcoming auctions, and makes the entire process effortless. As someone who’s always juggling deadlines, I really appreciate having someone who’s reliable and proactive in my corner. I couldn’t be more satisfied with the service and results!”*

It’s nice to hear from our customers that print still works! (And, as a reminder, consider using testimonials when promoting your papers.)

The MegaMarket program is the engine that drives our financial train. By the end of this month, CPM Business Manager Dana Risner will send out Publisher’s Rebates to those papers who run our classifieds. This year, the Board of Directors has also upped the rebate rate. To those who run MegaMarkets, “Thank you!” And, to those who don’t, “Please consider running this successful program. They don’t take up much room, and your readers will be assured to read them!”

Send Dana or myself an email to get on board!

Looking Ahead to 2026

When the new year starts, Dana will begin sending out membership renewal notices. Please fill them out with accurate circulation numbers, contacts, deadlines, etc. This makes it easier to sell into your publications.

Weekly community papers should focus on a mix of holiday engagement, year-end reflections, and forward-looking planning during December.

I asked AI, “What are operational tasks community papers should take in December?” Here are some of the answers that “Brain in Cyberspace” generated:

Engage Readers with User-Generated Content:

- Ask readers to submit photos of their decorated Christmas trees, pets in holiday attire, or “ugly sweaters” for a fun gallery feature.

- Gather stories about readers’ favorite or most meaningful Christmas ornaments or family traditions.

- Hold a Staff Brainstorming Session: Discuss the previous year’s performance and generate ideas for new content and operational improvements for the next year.

- Show Staff Appreciation: Acknowledge employees’ contributions, which can be done through bonuses, an occasional paid day off, or a holiday party.

- Automate Administrative Tasks: Look into automating repetitive processes like transactional emails, invoices, and evergreen marketing campaigns to improve efficiency.

- Consider Minor Redesigns or Equipment Updates: Freshening up the newspaper’s look or replacing outdated equipment can build excitement for the new year.

- Seek Reader Input: Use comments sections or email surveys to find out what topics and stories the community wants to read more about.

- Research Trends: Use tools like Google Trends or local forums to discover community interests and generate relevant story ideas.

Thank you

for the opportunity to communicate with you this year, and please remember if you have industry or CPM questions, reach out and ask me! Here’s a fond farewell to 2025 and a warm welcome to 2026.



By
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YOU'D BETTER SHOP AROUND:

Social Media WILL disappear – What's the future's next major advertising format?

Twenty or so years ago, newspapers, shopping guides, local radio, TV and billboards were the “traditional” media that dominated all hometown advertising. That’s the way marketing worked for decades, and virtually no one realized massive changes were just over the horizon.

Then came the dawn of **Social Media** such as Craigslist and LinkedIn. Classified and employment ads quickly disappeared from traditional media platforms. Almost instantly, local ads were sent directly to peoples’ phones and laptop screens.

Soon, local news followed, as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and Reddit instantly shared news and photos. YouTube and TikTok even brought videos, further digging into how traditional media were accepted and chosen by advertisers.

Even though those sites seemed local, all are owned by worldwide mega-companies worth billions of dollars each year.

But the future isn't all gloom and doom. Believe it or not, today's many brands of Social Media will be replaced by the next generation of platforms. Today's seemingly invincible goliaths will one day be just memories, or at least pale shadows of today's dominating media leaders.

Here's how Artificial Intelligence predicts this future:

“In 250 words, explain what the next type of personal communication will be to replace Social Media and advertising – and when might that happen?”

The next evolution of personal communication will likely be **Spatial Computing**, often referred to as the **Metaverse** or **Immersive Reality**. This shift moves us from the “flat” internet of 2D screens (scrolling text and video) to an “embodied” internet where we coexist in 3D digital spaces.

Instead of looking at a feed, you will be inside the experience. The primary interface will transition from smartphones to **Augmented Reality (AR) smart glasses**. These devices will overlay digital avatars of friends and family into your physical living room, creating a sense of “social presence” that current video calls lack. Communication will become synchronous and experiential—doing things together (like playing games, working, or hanging out) in real-time, rather than asynchronously liking posts. (*Our kids are playing AR games today.*)

When will this happen? We are already in what's called the **transition phase**.



2025-2027: Early adoption of lightweight smart glasses and mixed-reality headsets (e.g., Apple Vision Pro, Meta Orion) begins.

2028-2030: As hardware becomes indistinguishable from regular eyewear and 6G networks launch, this technology will likely reach mainstream adoption, effectively replacing the smartphone as our primary communication tool.

Looking further ahead (2040s): Brain-Computer Interfaces (BCI)—often called “synthetic telepathy”—could eventually replace physical screens entirely, allowing for direct neural communication. (*WHAT? Right into our brains? No thanks!*)

There you have it. I don't claim to totally understand all this, but I DO know radio was supposed to kill the movie industry. It didn't. TV was going to kill radio. Nope. And now Social Media suck up an outsized amount of local ad spending and eyeball time... but today's platforms will be replaced by something newer, bigger, better.

OUR JOB IS TO HOLD ON AND GROW OUR CORNER OF THE MEDIA WORLD BY STAYING LOCAL AND GIVING OUR COMMUNITIES PRODUCTS THEY WANT, USE... AND DESERVE.

New Year's Resolutions

Kevin shares ten resolutions as newspapers begin the new year

By Kevin Slimp

I've visited thousands of newspaper offices over the years. It always brings a smile to my face when I see one of my columns permanently placed on a wall. It happens more often than you might think. It seems like readers have a pronounced affection for lists, and what better time than the new year to create potential wall material.

Consider those words the preface for my New Year's list for 2026.

Kevin's Ten Resolutions

1 Begin 2026 by creating a calendar for the upcoming year. Gather the entire staff together to brainstorm ideas for the coming year. Be sure to include elections, holidays, sports seasons, festivals, and community milestones. Schedule special sections early to give advertisers plenty of time to make their marketing plans. Helping advertisers plan their year can pay significant dividends.

2 Update your mission statement, or create

one if you don't already have one. Make sure that your staff and your readers understand why your newspaper exists. State what your paper exists to do: tell community stories, celebrate local life, hold government accountable, and more. Be sure to put the mission statement in your media kit, on your website, and in your printed paper. Your mission statement should guide everything you do.

3 Update the design of your newspaper. Styles change all around us. The clothes we wear, the cars we drive, the color we paint our houses, and our kids' haircuts are all functions of style. Our newspapers are no different. Be sure to include a major headline and photo on each page. If you don't have a significant story, pick a story and make it the dominant story on the page. A big headline draws readers to the page. Don't allow your paper to become outdated. Stay abreast of the latest styles in color and design.

4 Improve the print quality of your news-



paper. Make sure your color settings are adjusted correctly in Photoshop. Check that the dot gain is set to maximize quality. Save your photos at the appropriate size and resolution. Steer clear of color blocks and reverse text. Discuss ways to improve the ink on the page with your printer.

5 Discuss goals with your advertisers. Ask about their goals for the year. Brainstorm ways you can help them meet those goals. Offer packages that are simple. Include print, online, special sections, email blasts, and social media in each package. Don't overcomplicate the process. Almost no one knows what a column inch is.

6 Invest in your team. Find workshops, webinars, and training events to grow the skills of your designers, advertising staff, editors, and reporters. Inquire

about opportunities through your press association. Take everyone out to lunch.

7 Create a reader's advisory panel if you don't already have one. Determine a meeting schedule and stick with it. These might be monthly or quarterly. Take the process a step further by scheduling a focus group of 12-20 community members.

8 Make a list (including staff brainstorming) of interesting people in the community for potential human-interest stories throughout the year. Set a goal of having at least one sizable human-interest story in each issue. You might even create a designated page for this.

9 Tidy up your office. As simple as this sounds, I visit many messy offices. Heck, mine is one of them. Let's take the first of the year to do a

"spring cleaning" and get our workspace in order.

10 Create a new weekly feature. It might be "Teacher of the Week," "Student of the Week," "Unsung Hero," or "From the Archives." The possibilities are almost endless.

With the advent of online training and consulting, I don't visit as many newspapers as I used to. You can bet when I do, I'll be on the lookout for this column on the wall. Happy New Year.



Kevin Slimp
"The News Guru"

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Kevin Slimp has served as an advisor and trainer for newspapers throughout the world since 1995. His online classes can be found at :

newspaperacademy.com



10 Ideas to Keep Your Media Sales Game Sharp!

Media Sales Coach, Ryan Dohrn



With a buying bump on the horizon, it is important that we as media sales training seekers move advertisers beyond pre-election objections and help them embrace new opportunities. But, emotional decision-making still drives purchases, with 64% of my media sales coaching clients reporting that buyers still prioritize feelings over logic. As an ad sales training coach, success in this climate requires empathy and insight-driven strategies.

- **Lead with Stories:** Real-world success stories resonate with emotionally driven buyers, building trust where data alone falls short.
- **Rethink Your Questions:** Move beyond, "What's your budget?" and ask, "Are there any competitors of yours that excel in marketing?" to uncover their likes and goals.
- **Promote Multi-Media Solutions:** End the digital-versus-traditional debate. Show how combining platforms, such as social ads and print, boosts results.

- **Define Clear ROI Minimums:** It is not about what an advertiser "wants" to spend, it is our job to guide them toward what they "need" to spend.

- **Offer Ready-to-Use Ideas:** Present proven, category-specific campaigns that advertisers can quickly implement.

- **Position Yourself as an Advisor:** Be a problem solver, not just a seller, by offering data-driven strategies tailored to their needs.

- **Debunk the Social-Only Myth:** Stress that relying solely on social platforms limits reach and engagement opportunities.

- **Clarify Digital vs. Social:** Explain how permission-based digital ads from media partners drive more trusted engagement than intrusive social ads.

- **Showcase Traditional Media's Impact:** Demonstrate how platforms like TV, radio, and print complement digital efforts, increasing conversions.

- **Promote the Marketing Triangle:** Advocate for a balanced approach blending traditional, digital, and social strategies for maximum impact.

Check out this new App!

After six months of work, my SALES COACH app has launched on the Apple App Store. Daily sales tips and motivation! I would be grateful if you downloaded it and gave me a 5-star review. The first 7 days are free, and then you can cancel if you do not find it helpful.

This is the link: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/the-sales-coach/id6740490069>

Go to the Apple App Store on your iPhone and search for Ryan Dohrn or The Sales Coach. Google Play coming soon.

After you download the app, create an account and get started. Each week I will upload more sales tips and tricks for you.

Thank you for ALL your support over the years.

Ryan Dohrn
Billion-Dollar
Media Sales
Performance
Coach



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



BY JOHN FOUST

When I was a kid, my family went on a family vacation to the mountains of North Carolina. For a couple of nights, we stayed at a motel which had a play area with a few activities for children. The thing I most remember was a small archery range, which consisted of a couple of straw-filled targets, a bow and an arrow. One of the motel employees – probably a college student with a summer job – was there to make sure no one got hurt. Along the way, he taught a few basics about shooting a bow. The only advice I recall was to make a T-shape with the arm that is extended to hold the bow and the arm which is bent at the elbow to pull back the string. The bowstring arm should be straight back, not against the archer's side.

I think about that little archery range every now and then, because I've been relating advertising to archery for more than 30 years. Archery provides us with a good comparison – and an easily understood visual image – to share with advertisers. When you narrow the subject to three elements – the bow, the arrow and the target – you have the key ingredients of an advertising campaign. Use the bow to shoot the arrow at the target. It's that simple.

Let's take a closer look at this comparison:

1. The target represents the target audience – a specific group of consumers who fit the profile of likely buyers of certain products or services. It would be ridiculous for an advertiser to try to aim an arrow at more than one target at a time. The object of archery is to hit the bullseye on one target.

Likewise, the object of advertising is to reach a clearly defined target audience.

2. The arrow represents the message. An arrow with a bent shaft will veer off course and probably fall to the ground. An arrow with a blunt end might hit the target, but won't

stick. And an arrow with faulty fletching (the fin-like stabilizers at the back) will wobble its way into the ground.

Like an arrow needs to be straight and true in order to make its way to the target, an advertising message should exhibit the time-tested principles of effective advertising.

That means a compelling offer, a strong headlines, relevant illustrations, audience-centered copy, an identifiable logo, and specific purchasing information.

3. The bow represents the delivery system – in our case, print and digital newspapers. In order to function properly, the bow should be of the right design and construction, in the form of market coverage, creative guidance, high production standards, and superb customer service. From the advertiser's perspective, it's crucial to build in an adequate advertising budget, a solid media plan, and a consistent strategy.

Each of these elements is crucial to the success of an advertising effort. The good news is that you are in position to positively influence decisions on all three. Do that – and you're on your way to bullseye results.

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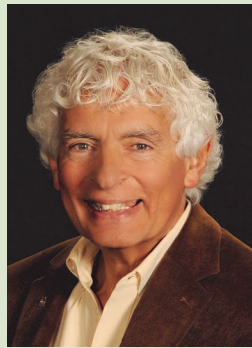
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