

# *January* 2026 **INFORMER**



**Community  
Papers of  
Michigan**





## HAPPY NEW YEAR, AND LET'S GET TO WORK!

*From Executive Director Don Rush*

**Happy New Year, CPM Membership!**  
**We hope you had a wonderful 2025.**  
**As we move into 2026, we are eager to hear your success stories as they unfold in the coming months.**

### A Look Back: 2025 at a Glance

Last year was a productive one for our network. Thanks to your hard work and our collective reach, CPM handled significant volume across our platforms:

In 2025, CPM handled/sold \$183,293.09 in pre-print insertion orders for membership.

In 2025, CPM sold \$80,128.18 into our statewide classified network, MegaMarket.

In 2025, CPM sold \$20,848.07 in display advertising for membership.

From those sales, CPM was able to give back over \$183,000 to membership.

### Looking Ahead: Operation Insert 2026!

One of our primary goals for 2026 is securing more pre-print inserts for our members. To give this effort the focus it deserves, I've dubbed it "Operation Insert 2026!"

I am currently targeting Menards and other "big box" retailers to expand their preprint placements within our member publications. If you have a Menards (or a similar major retailer) in your area but do not currently receive their inserts, we want to advocate for you.

If you haven't already responded to my January 7th email, please reply to DonRush@CPapersMi.com with the following details:

- Paper Dimensions
- Zip Code List
- Publication Day
- Total Circulation
- Current Insert Rate
- Proposed CPM Rate (Note: CPM typically

retains a 10% commission)

While it is too late for Q1, we have a strong chance to get in front of marketing teams for the second quarter. If you already receive Menards inserts, no action is needed—keep up the great work!

In the near future, CPM Business Manager Dana Risener will send out notices to renew your membership. When responding, please also email her with your 2026 rate cards and media kits. These kits and rate cards help us when clients ask to advertise in your publications – we need to know how to answer questions and be a productive part of your valued sales team.

I have another ask of you: If you are not currently running our statewide classified network, MegaMarket, please consider doing so in 2026. Running these "liners" will help build your classified ad count. The more classifieds your readers and customers have the chance to browse, the better chance you have that they will market their goods and services on your Want Ads page. MegaMarket classifieds are also the economic engine that drives CPM down the tracks. Members who run these classifieds also receive rebates at year's end. Thank you for your consideration!

### Good news is infectious!

This year share the love! Email us your successful sales efforts, sections and programs. Also, let us know when you have a new hire, or make promotions. The more members share their successes and good news, the better-informed membership will be. We all can use a new idea to try out . . . so, try it out. Email your successes and employment news to me, DonRush@CPapersMi.com.

Speaking of good news, I received an email which will help members who use the United States Postal Service to distribute your publications. I sent out an email to membership on Jan. 14. For those who don't know, you run a pre-approved ad in your paper and you receive a discount.

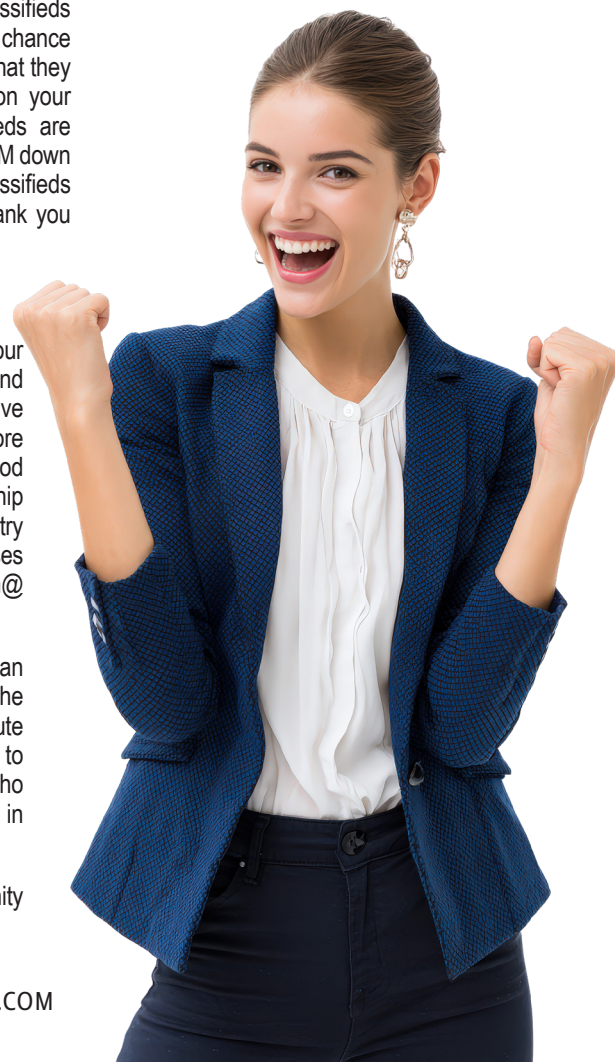
From the email, "Any community

publication that uses USPS Marketing Mail to deliver their publication can take advantage of participation in this program to save 5% off the total postage cost for a 6-month period with the flexibility to choose your own start date. The 6 months must be consecutive months during the 2026 calendar year."

If you have not received the email, drop me a line and I will send it to you. It will have links to USPS instructions, Promotions and the Approved Ad Download, as well as an email and phone number if you have any questions.

### Final thought

If there is any help I can offer membership, please let me know. I am here to help and hopefully will be able to come through for you!



# Are you dreaming big enough?

Recent conversations have ignited my passion

By Kevin Slimp

If I were to ask you to mark a spot on a line with a “1” on the left end and a “10” on the right end – with “10” representing “extremely passionate” and “1” representing “no passion at all” – how would you rate yourself when you think of your current passion for your newspaper?

Reading a post by Joey Young, publisher in Kansas, prodded my thoughts toward passion this morning. Some of you are familiar with Joey. In many ways, he reminds me of the younger version of me. Joey is very passionate about newspapers, and his passion leads him – and Lindsey, his co-publisher and wife – to many interesting places. In his post, Joey wrote about his recent conversation with NPR podcast host Jake Williams. Jake hosts a podcast titled “Out of Print: The Unmaking of American News.”

As I looked back over Jake’s podcasts, I quickly realized I knew many of the newspaper folks he had interviewed. He seems genuinely interested in small community newspapers.

**Okay, back to passion.**

I spent my morning today visiting with the publisher of a well-known periodical about the possibility of taking ownership and moving it under my publishing company’s umbrella. We agreed there was great interest on both of our parts. Afterwards, I called a friend and brainstormed ideas to grow the publication and make it much more recognized than it currently is.

*“Be the flame,  
not the moth.”*

**Giacomo Casanova**

Before I knew it, I was listing influential writers (both in the U.S. and internationally) who could help by writing for the publication. I threw out an idea of localizing the periodical by getting news organizations around the world to submit their own material and create localized “issues” that could be accessed online. We discussed who I could recruit to join quarterly focus groups to review the content and brainstorm ways to

improve what we’re doing.

The conversation with my friend lasted less than 30 minutes. Still, in that short time, we came up with at least a dozen ideas

for monetizing the publication and getting the right people in place to create something we could expand beyond its current audience. By the end of the conversation, we were both “hyped up” about the possibility of growing this periodical.

You can probably guess where I’m going with this. My question for you is, “Are you dreaming big enough?” In the phone conversation with my friend, he kept reminding me that the most essen-

tial first step is to lay the groundwork – that is, to dream the dream – of what we’re building. Determining where the workforce and money will come from comes later. For now, however, it’s critical to dream about what could be. Afterwards, we can figure out how to get there.

Obviously, I don’t have enough to do if I’m thinking of taking on a project of this magnitude (yes, that’s a joke). Still, allow me to have this moment of passion. Allow me to dream of what could be. It’s futile to worry about the details until the dream is in place.

As we move into 2026, it seems an appropriate time to take stock of where we are and to dream dreams of where we could be. Visualizing is an essential step in our personal lives (just call me

“Dr. Kevin”) and in our role as journalists. Let me take this opportunity to encourage you to visualize where your newspaper could be in six months or a year.

I’m still feeling the passion of my morning conversations, and I’m sure I’ll act on them sooner rather than later. However, like most of you, it’s time for me to get back to work.



**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

**DREAMS**

**PASSION**



# Why a Strong Sales Pipeline Makes “No” Easier to Handle

*Media Sales Coach, Ryan Dohrn*

You put in the work. You had the conversations. You built a smart proposal. And then the renewal does not come back or the contract does not close. That moment can frustrate even the best salespeople.

But here is the truth about the sales business. Not every deal closes. And that reality does not define your success. Your pipeline does.

When your pipeline is strong, a no is just part of the process. When your pipeline is weak, a no feels personal. That difference matters more than most salespeople realize.

## Sales Confidence Comes From Volume

Sales would be easy if every proposal turned into a signed agreement. It does not work that way. That is why real sales training focuses on structure and consistency, not hope.

When you have options, you sell differently. You are calmer. You negotiate better. You stop chasing deals that are not serious.

This lesson applies across media sales training, ad sales training, broadcast sales training, and corporate sales training. Confidence is not about closing one deal. It is about knowing you have others behind it.

## The Rule of Three in Your Pipeline

Here is a simple framework that works.

If you need 10 deals to close, you should have at least 30 active prospects in your pipeline.

Everything times three.

This removes pressure from any single conversation. When one deal falls out, another moves forward. When a renewal does not come back, you already have momentum elsewhere.

That is not luck. That is planning.



***Your sales pipeline is critical to your sales success***  
***Losing a deal stinks. Period!***

## How I Apply This Every Day

I build my sales activity around the Rule of Three because it keeps things simple and repeatable.

Three-word subject lines.

Three sentences max in an email.

Follow up every three business days.

Three times the number of prospects I actually need.

This structure creates consistency. It also keeps emotion out of the process. Systems beat stress every time.

Most salespeople do not struggle because they lack skill. They struggle because they lack volume at the top of the funnel.

## Front-Load the Work

One of the biggest mistakes salespeople make is waiting too long to build a pipeline. They work one deal at a time and hope it closes.

Hope is not a strategy.

When you front-load conversations, everything gets easier later. You stop panicking when deals stall. You stop forcing bad fits. You sell from a position of strength.

If you lose someone on one side of the pipeline, you already have someone ready on the other side. That is how professionals sell.

## What to Focus on This Month

Look at your pipeline today. Ask yourself how many real conversations you have going and how many you actually need to hit your goal.

If you need 10, build 30.

If you need five, build 15.

Over the next 30 days, focus less on closing and more on adding volume. Closing takes care of itself when opportunity is abundant.

Never forget... If sales was easy, everyone would be doing it. They are not. We are the chosen few. This is a great career that will feed your family for a lifetime.

—Ryan Dohrn

*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.*



# WHAT'S FOGGING YOUR VIEW?

## Ad-Libs



BY JOHN FOUST

On our honeymoon, my wife and I went to Ogunquit, Maine, which we used as a home base to explore towns along Maine's southern coast. Years before we met, we had each been to that area, but this was our first trip to Maine together. One of the places we visited was Cape Neddick, where one of the most recognized lighthouses in North America is located.

The Nubble Light is situated on a rock island about 100 yards off the tip of the cape (depending on the tides), in view of York Beach. When we arrived, the light was

completely fogged in. "The lighthouse is right there," I said. "Are you sure? I don't see a thing," she said. "Yep," I encouraged her, "it's right there."

When it was time for lunch, we went to Fox's Restaurant at the edge of the parking lot. We settled in at our table at a window facing the direction of the lighthouse. Still fogged in.

As we dined on lobster rolls, fries and Pepsis – the best lunch we've ever had – she glanced out the window and said, "There it is! It's right there!" Sure enough, the fog had lifted in an instant, and the glorious Nubble was "right there" at the end of the parking lot.

That's one of our favorite memories and we still talk about it as a special honeymoon gift. Sometimes, if we're looking for something around the house or searching for a street sign, one of us will say, "It's right there!"

The question to consider today is: What's blocking the view? For us it was ocean fog. For you it may be something else.

Let's think about the advertising industry. What are the things that prevent us from seeing clearly? Is it the routine processes

that are in place, because "we've always done it that way"? Is it the get-it-done-now crush of deadlines? Is it the insistence of a client who is not open to new ideas?

Whatever the case, this is something we have to deal with if we want to be more effective. First of all, it helps to know what's behind the fog. When my wife and I visited the Nubble Light, I knew from experience that there was a lighthouse inside all that fog. Then she was a first-hand witness when the fog lifted. We left with the certainty that there was, indeed, a lighthouse right there.

We need to step away from the fog every now and then, and do some thinking about what's causing the rut of routines, the deadlines that negatively impact creativity, or the client who resists new ideas.

Once we identify a specific problem area, we can focus on possible answers. It's important to think in specifics, not vague impressions. For example, "The current way of processing orders is delaying some ad placements," is better than "Our processing system is bad."

That's a step in the right direction – one way to cut through the fog and see the light.

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## ***YOU'D BETTER SHOP AROUND:*** **Try these three great** ***– but also scary –*** **free search websites**

**BEFORE WE GEAR UP FOR MARKETING AND ADVERTISING BUSINESS IN THIS NEW YEAR, LET'S LEARN ABOUT THREE FUN TIME-WASTERS:**

You will either love or hate knowing about these three free websites. Actually, I predict you'll quickly decide to use at least one of them, but you might be frightened by them at the same time. And you probably should be.

Several years ago, I was seeking a fast way to find mailing addresses for some friends, so I could send them "cheer up" cards (*yes, I still send a few "snail mail" cards. That's a topic for another day.*)

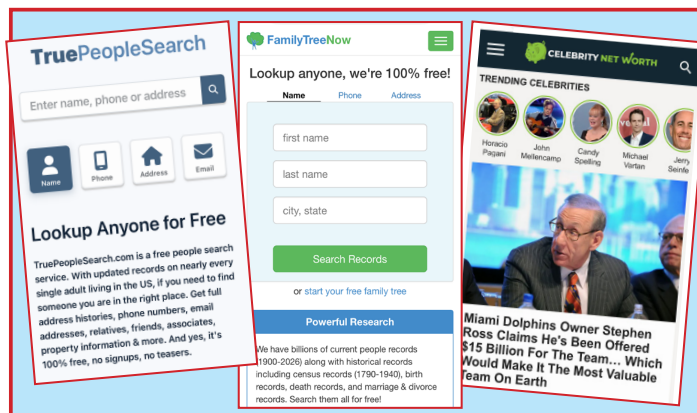
That's when I came upon the [TruePeopleSearch.com](https://www.truepeoplesearch.com) website. Simply type in the person's name and city, and their information should rapidly appear. Now, click on the blue "View Details" box. Here you'll find exact addresses, and they're usually very current. You'll even find that person's age and birth month (*that's kind of scary to be sure.*)

**AND THERE'S SO** much more information offered. That includes former mailing addresses, landline and cell phone numbers and even email addresses (*Many of these email addresses are outdated.*) Even more scary are the other details offered — possible relatives, people they may associate with, plus access to court, marriage and arrest records. Often, the value of the person's house is included, too.

You can also use True People Search if you have an unknown phone number (*Reverse Phone*) or have a street address you'd like to know more about (*Reverse Address*) with limited success.

Most of the information found here seems to be compiled from public documents such as leases, mortgages, loans and land transfers. I find this site fascinating yet very frightening, because of how much they know about you. Stay on the main site, since side boxes want you to pay for more information.

**TRY IT ON** yourself, for starters. Most people first enter your own name, which is a normal thing to do. Then, you'll probably enter the name of a family member, neighbor, friend and then an enemy or two. It all comes up quickly, anonymously and at no cost. They seem to know more about us than we do!



Since you're already searching, here's a second website to explore: type [FamilyTreeNow.com](https://www.familytreenow.com) in your browser. This one gives you family census history plus additional details when you click on "View Details." Sometimes you'll even find answers to where a relative is buried, which is unique and helpful for historians.

Family Tree Now also encourages you to buy more access — but don't do that. Just keep searching the free areas, to shudder a little, while you likely will learn a lot.

**NOW, FOR FUN:** We hear about famous and rich people all the time... and we often wonder what they're worth. For financial details, go to [CelebrityNetWorth.com](https://www.celebritynetworth.com) and use the search bar to enter the name of a famous person. You'll usually find how much each individual is worth, plus some life details. For instance:

- Incoming U-M Football Coach, [Kyle Whittingham](#)? He's worth \$8 million during 2026, the site says;
- Michigan's favorite rock musician, [Bob Seger](#)? He's compiled \$60 million;
- General Motors CEO, [Mary Barra](#)? She has accumulated \$90 million thus far, and
- how about the world's richest man, [Elon Musk](#)? He's worth at least \$750 billion.

These all are educated guesses from companies wanting your eyeballs to see what they offer... and it's just for fun. But it's quite fascinating, too.

Now, we return you to your normal internet and social media scrolling... with three possible places to waste (*I mean SPEND*) some of your time at no cost. It's all in search of knowledge, information and answers, right?

Sure it is, lol !!!



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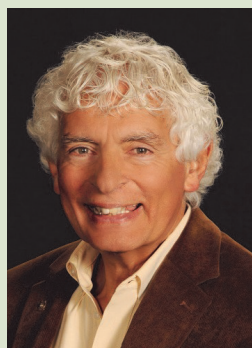
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