

CPF News

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We wish you a
Merry Christmas,
We wish you a
Merry Christmas,
We wish you a
Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year!

*Dave, Barbara,
& the CPF
Board of Directors*

CPF's Board of Directors & Staff



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Mission Statement: To support the success and growth of our members and the community paper industry.



Member Benefits

Your CPF membership provides a multitude of benefits and services that are paid for by the CPF classified network. If you haven't already, you'll want to take advantage of some of the following benefits:

- Audits provided by Circulation Verification Council (CVC).
- Annual Convention.
- A flat fee of \$49 per room per night (which includes the hotel room, lunch, dinner, training sessions by top industry speakers, and outstanding entertainment) for classified network members, according to the Board of Directors' established attendance guidelines. Current guidelines are: For publications that **SELL** network classified ads: Up to 100K circulation, 2 rooms (with 2 persons per room, for a total of 4 attendees); 101-300K, 3 rooms (with a total of 6 attendees); 301-500K, 5 rooms (with a total of 10 attendees); 501-750K, 6 rooms (with a total of 12 attendees); 751K-1 million, 7 rooms (with a total of 14 attendees); and over 1 million circulation, 9 rooms (with a total of 18 attendees). For publications that **only PLACE** (but do not **SELL**) network classified ads: Up to 100K circulation, 1 room (with 2 persons, for a total of 2 attendees); 101-300K, 2 rooms (with 2 persons per room, for a total of 4 attendees); 301-500K, 4 rooms (with a total of 8 attendees); 501-750K, 5 rooms (with a total of 10 attendees); 751K-1 million, 6 rooms (with a total of 12 attendees); and over 1 million circulation, 8 rooms (with a total of 16 attendees).
- Convention Idea Fairs. Earn cash awards. Share ideas. Fantastic opportunities to take home revenue-generating ideas.
- Annual CPF "Awards for Excellence" contest to honor our editorial and graphic service personnel.
- Nationally-recognized convention speakers.

- An opportunity to earn money through CPF's classified network.
- Quarterly CPF newsletters.
- AFCP's Free Paper INK. No cost to members.
- Training seminars provided. No cost.
- Disaster Fund Aid in the event of a hurricane, tornado, or other catastrophic event.
- A successful tax lobby effort, still working for you.
- The Saturation Mailers Coalition, fighting for a positive postal rate, pricing, operation and service environment that benefits free paper publishers that mail.
- Defending our industry against the assaults of government and others that may choose to consider us as second-class citizens.
- Helping publishers in CPF gain their market share of revenue and protecting their interests.
- Promoting the free paper industry. CPF has budgeted funds to promote our industry to our readers and our outstanding value to both advertisers and consumers.
- A great opportunity to work together as a team to make Florida a better place to live!
- The CPF Website with CPF news, including classifieds for the following week; advertising information; links to Member publications and state, regional and national free paper organizations; photos from past conferences; and a list of Member Publications (with audited circulation figures). Visit: www.communitypapersofflora.com



The President's Message

Put the 2016 conference on your calendar now!

– Wendy Murray

The Community Publishers of Florida (CPF) has set its sights on another huge conference in the New Year.

As we did several years ago, we will once again join with the Independent Free Papers of America (IFPA) and the Southeastern Advertising Publishers Association (SAPA) for our annual conference September 28 to October 1 in Orlando.

And as we have the past several years, we will return to the Caribe Royale Resort. The Caribe is a great place to enjoy Orlando and Disney World. The rooms are true suites and the recreation offered is outstanding. Those who want to take advantage of Disney World will receive reduced rates after 4 p.m.

In the near future, the three associations will start looking at the conference program. With the costs being split three ways, we will have the budget to bring in some top industry speakers. As we did last year, we will also utilize the talent we have in the associations to provide some training sessions.

For the annual "Awards for Excellence" awards ceremony, the board has opted not to join IFPA and SAPA for this session. CPF will have a break-out session and will use the same format as we did last year.

The amount CPF will charge members to attend the conference will be determined by the board of directors at their January session. Last year the charge was \$49 per night, and that fee included the meals and the sessions.

The revenue from the classified network continued on a downward trend this past year. With the many cost-cutting measures put into place early in 2015, we only had to dip into our reserves to pay for the conference.

We have added a new twist to the classified network (see the related

article on page 6 of this newsletter) and we hope it will turn the tide for sales. In past years this association made some great memories, which can be attributed to revenue generated by the classified ads.

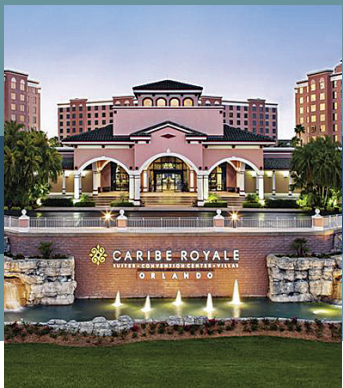
The terms of the CPF officers and directors end at the September 2016 conference. It will be my pleasure to turn the gavel over to the incoming president. At the January board meeting a nominating committee will be appointed. This committee will make recommendations on who will serve for the next two-year period. The recommendations will be presented to the general membership for approval at the business meeting that will be scheduled during the conference.

Place the 2016 conference on your calendar now.

Have a Merry Christmas and make it a great New Year!

Welcome, Highlands Sun!

A hearty "welcome" shout out goes to CPF's newest member, the Highlands Sun in Sebring! This 12,500-circulation weekly community newspaper covers the cities of Avon Park, Sebring and Lake Placid in Highlands County. We're happy to have you as a CPF member!



Conference Update

We're back to the Caribe Royale with IFPA & SAPA!

Mark your calendar now for September 28 – October 1, 2016!

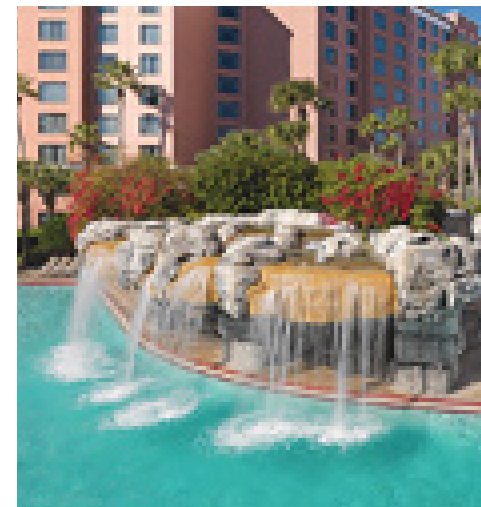
The Community Papers of Florida is returning to the Caribe Royale Resort in Orlando for another joint conference with IFPA and SAPA in 2016.

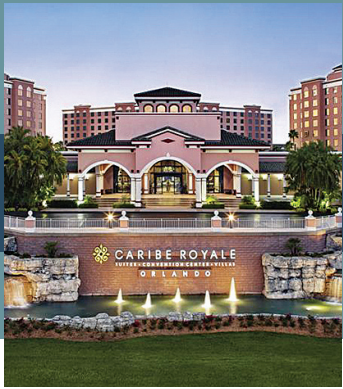
The resort offers transportation to nearby Disney World, top recreation facilities and great meeting rooms. In the past it has provided good service and food as well as suites for each member who attended.

Dining options include a restaurant, a coffee shop/café, a poolside bar and a bar/lounge. Room service is available 24 hours a day. Recreational amenities include an outdoor pool, a children's pool, a spa tub, and a fitness facility.

Details and the agenda for the conference will be announced in the near future.

The conference will kick off on September 28 and conclude on Saturday evening. 🌐





Conference Update

Seeking Nominations for the Beckerman Award!

Nominate your publication, your employees or yourself!

Milton and Bernice Beckerman, CPF associate members for more than 25 years, were newspaper brokers with big hearts.

In 1993 they placed \$15,000 in a fund with the intent that a CPF publisher (or a member of his or her staff) be recognized annually for outstanding community service. The CPF Board of Directors is delighted to bring back this prestigious award.

If you have been involved in sponsoring a community event or charity, or if an individual on your staff (or you personally) have worked to improve the quality of life in the communities you represent, please use the entry blank on this page to enter.

We thank you for your service to your community. 🍷

The Milton & Bernice Beckerman Award Entry Form

This award honors a CPF member publication, or an employee of a member publication, for outstanding community service from September 1, 2015 through August 30, 2016. This service can be in the form of a special edition that benefitted a community or charity, a fund-raising event for a charity, an employee who performed service for his community, etc. Please complete the entry form, attach any pertinent backup (i.e. pictures, tearsheets, etc.), and return it to the CPF office so that it is received no later than September 1, 2016. Mail to CPF, P.O. Box 1149, Summerfield, FL 34492; fax to 352-347-3384; or email to CPFDisplayAds@aol.com.

Name of Publication: _____

Publisher: _____

Service Performed: _____

Date Service Performed: _____

Effects of the Service: _____

Name of Employee (if employee related): _____

Announcements

Changes to the CPF Classified Network for 2016!

New changes give reps options and add bonuses for managers!




The board of directors authorized some changes to the CPF Classified Network that will give the reps some options.

The selling reps have the option of maintaining the present promotion of selling three weeks for \$395 each and giving the client the fourth week free. The four-week effective net rate is \$296.25 per week. (with \$197.50/week due to CPF).

The new options available to reps include:

- Sell a client one week for \$495 (with \$247.50 due to CPF);
- Sell two weeks at \$495 each and get one week free, for an effective net rate of \$330 per week (with \$247.50/week to CPF); or
- Sell the best rate option available: four weeks at \$395 each with two weeks free. The net rate for this six-week option is \$263.33 per week (with \$197.50/week to CPF).

These additional choices place the selling options in the hands of the sales reps.



2016 Order Form Network Classified Ad

Questions?
Call Barbara Holmes at
352-347-4470 or email
CPFDisplayAds@aol.com.

Originating Publication _____

Sales Rep _____

Rep's Email _____

Rep's Phone Number _____

Name of Advertiser _____

Check here for a **New Advertiser** (at least 6 months since last ad)

Start Date _____

Number of Insertions _____

Amount Paid to CPF _____

(Wednesday's Date)

PLEASE MARK ONE OF THESE

RATE For Zones 1, 2 or 3 (Basic ad with no enhancements, PARTIAL circulation):

<p>\$245 for Zone 1 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>\$122.50 to CPF</p> <p>Words over 25, \$10 ea. <i>(Includes all papers EXCEPT The Miami & Tampa Flyers)</i></p>	<p>\$295 for Zone 2 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>\$147.50 to CPF</p> <p>Words over 25, \$20 ea. <i>(Includes all papers EXCEPT The Miami Flyer)</i></p>	<p>\$345 for Zone 3 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>\$172.50 to CPF</p> <p>Words over 25, \$25 ea. <i>(Includes all papers EXCEPT The Tampa Flyer)</i></p>	<p>BUY 3 WEEKS, <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>GET 1 WEEK FREE:</p> <p><i>This option applies to all 3 zones. All 4 ads must run consecutively.</i></p>
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OR CHOOSE ONE OF THESE ZONE 4 BUYS

RATES For Zone 4 Ads ONLY (Basic ad with no enhancements, FULL circulation):

<p>1 WEEK: \$495 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>\$247.50 to CPF</p>	<p>BUY 2 WEEKS <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>@\$495 EACH,</p> <p>GET 1 WEEK FREE</p> <p><i>(Effective rate is \$330.00)</i></p> <p><i>Words over 25, \$30 ea.</i></p> <p><i>Ads must run consecutively.</i></p>	<p>BUY 3 WEEKS <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>@\$395 EACH,</p> <p>GET 1 WEEK FREE</p> <p><i>(Effective rate is \$296.25)</i></p>	<p>BUY 4 WEEKS <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>@\$395 EACH,</p> <p>GET 2 WEEKS FREE</p> <p><i>(Effective rate is \$263.33)</i></p>
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YOU MAY ALSO CHOOSE ENHANCEMENTS

ENHANCEMENT BUYS (Available for Zone 1 ads ONLY):

<p>Basic Ad, Bolder <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>\$30 / week to CPF</p>	<p>Basic Ad, Bordered <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>\$35 / week to CPF</p>	<p>Basic Ad, Centered <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>\$40 / week to CPF</p>	<p>Basic Ad with a Headline <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>\$45 / week to CPF</p>
<p>Basic Ad with Color Background <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>(Grayscale Background, if Color Not Available)</i></p> <p>\$50 / week to CPF</p>	<p>DELUXE AD (Includes All Enhancements) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>(Save \$145 per week!)</i></p> <p>\$55 / week to CPF</p>		

NOTE: 20% of all ad enhancements sold is paid to the selling rep in the form of a month-end bonus.

AD COPY:

Ad copy must be received by CPF by 5:00 p.m. Wednesday prior to insertion week. FAX to 1-352-347-3384 or email to CPFDisplayAds@aol.com. CPF will invoice members each month. REV. 11-5-15

Enhancements are still available for Zones 1, 2 or 3 and the prices have not changed. Bolding is \$30/week; a border is \$35/week; centering is \$40/week; a headline is \$45/week; a color background is \$50/week; and a deluxe ad with all enhancements is \$55/week. A commission of 20% of all ad enhancements sold is paid to the selling rep in the form of a month-end bonus.

One change in the criteria defining new advertisers is that the client must not have placed an ad in the network for the past six months.

The association will continue to pay monthly bonus money to the top reps in the points contest and \$50 for each new advertiser sold. In addition, for 2016 the classified managers will receive an amount equal to 25% of the bonus funds paid to their sales reps. For instance, if \$500 is paid to the sale reps, the manager will receive \$125.

A copy of the 2016 Order Form appears here. Full-sized forms can be downloaded from the members-only section of the CPF website, or you can request one by emailing CPFDisplayAds@aol.com.

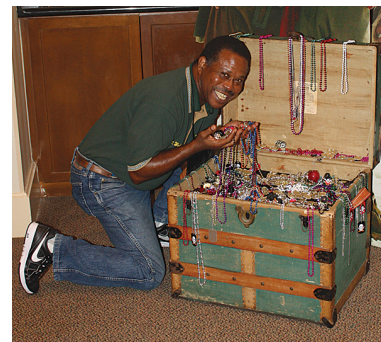
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2015

Adieu, Au Revoir, Ciao, Adios & Farewell!

Say Ta-Ta to 2015 & get ready for a prosperous New Year

Here's a few highlights from the 2015 annual conference. Enjoy!





PaperChain Update

Overcoming the Toughest Objections

— Jim Busch

The Man of La Mancha is one of my favorite plays. I think Don Quixote is a good role model for sales people. He ignores everyone who tells him he is crazy, he goes out alone to do battle against great odds, and he never gives up hope.

While we may not have to joust with spinning windmills or scuffle with bands of ruffians, the “dragons” we have to slay come in the form of customer objections. Some customers who want to brush us off quickly throw out “unbeatable” objections designed to send us scurrying away, with our proverbial tails between our legs. Here are three of these “unbeatable objections” you’re sure to encounter and how to overcome them.

Business owners know that one of the easiest ways to get rid of a sales person is to show them that they have no need for advertising. This is why, “I get all of my business from word of mouth and referrals!” The advantage of this “brush off” is that it puts the sales person in an impossible competitive position... since word of mouth advertising is free, we

know we can’t compete on price. Prospects also like using this one because it gives them a chance to puff out their chest and brag about their success. Since it is their word against yours, you can’t challenge this objection without calling the prospect a liar, not the best way to start a rewarding relationship.

While a business that offers good prices and good service will get some business from

To dream the impossible dream,
To sell the unsellable prospect,
To answer unanswerable objections,
To close the unclosable deal.

referrals, it is seldom enough to keep a business growing, so in reality they need to advertise. My approach to handling the word of mouth objection is to indulge the customer’s fantasy. Rather than challenge this objection, I show interest in it. I begin by praising the customer, “Wow, that’s great! Not many businesses find themselves in that position.”

I then begin probing the prospect about their business, but I disguise my questions by asking, “Obviously you are doing something right! What are you doing differently from your competitors?” I’ve found that customers who offer this objection like to talk about their business so you can collect a lot of valuable information about what they do. I then turn the direction of the conversation to what advertising could do for them. “Mr./Ms. Customer, you’ve told me a lot about what you’re doing here, do you think if more people knew about (repeat back customer’s information) that they would want to do business with you?”

I reinforce the value of advertising by telling them, “Businesses like yours get a bigger bang for their investment in my paper, for every customer the typical business gains by advertising, you’ll get two or more because of your word of mouth.” I also talk to them about recovering “lost referrals,” explaining how print reminds readers about a half-remembered referral from a friend and solidifies it by providing them with a phone number and an address. When I was a sales rep, I had some cards printed which read, “Word of Mouth Advertising, Jim Busch Local Representative.”
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This usually got a laugh from a customer, but allowed me to open the subject of how advertising does not compete with word of mouth but actually enhances it.

Another objection that is tough to overcome is the, “I’ve got more business than I can handle. I have to turn customers away.” Much like the word of mouth objection, this is one part unbeatable objection and another part braggadocio.

In most cases this statement is as truthful as a politician’s promise a week before the election. Very few businesses are actually functioning at their full capacity. I have actually seen customers who were interrupted in the middle of telling me how they had too much business, only to go into sales mode on the phone trying to win a new job. The initial response to this objection is similar to the technique described above – praise the customer to get them talking about their business.

In this case, you should direct your probing to discover areas where they have room for growth. In the case of a restaurant, they may do great at lunch, but dinner time is slow in the middle of the week. Service businesses may be slow during some seasons of the year. Once you find these openings you can start talking about filling these gaps in their schedule. (See “How much does an empty table cost?” in the Link and Learn archives at paperchain.org)

In some cases the customer may actually be telling the truth – they may be fully booked. This is especially the case in businesses that require skilled labor. This can include registered plumbers to your local dentist. It is difficult and expensive to expand these businesses due to a shortage of qualified workers and the large investment required for tools. Operating a business at full capacity does have a downside. It means that the owner’s income

By gaining an in-depth understanding of the customer’s business, you can develop a program that will help them accomplish their goals.

is capped and there is no room to grow the business. A business may be able to raise their prices, but often the market or their competition can make this impractical.

Once again, good probing skills are the key to overcoming this problem. Your questions should concern the relative profitability of the goods and services offered by the busi-

ness. For example, a contractor may do roofing and windows. In your probing you learn that replacing a roof is a big job that is very profitable, while a competitive environment keeps the price of window installation low and the profit margin razor thin. You can use this information to make a case for focusing the contractor’s advertising on roofing. By increasing the number of roofing jobs, the business owner can increase his profits without spending more on operating costs. By gaining an in-depth understanding of the customer’s business, you can develop a program that will help them accomplish their goals.

Some customers like to use their “budget” like a broom to sweep away unwanted sales people. “Oh I’m so sorry, I’d love to advertise with you but we’ve already spent our budget for the year.” This is a “nice” way to tell you NO! The customer doesn’t have to argue the merits of what you’re offering or tell you they don’t like what you’re selling. They know you will go away if they have no money to give you. They set up “the budget” like it is a federal statute that must not be violated. It is cast in stone and their hands are tied.

Larger businesses and those with good accountants may actually have a written budget which allots a certain amount for marketing and advertising. In my experience, very few small businesses actually have any sort of a formal budget. They sell their products to their customers and pay their bills, taking what

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they have left over as their paycheck. Most small business owners manage their affairs intuitively. They will spend money if they feel it will improve their bottom line. They operate their business more by gut feelings than spreadsheets.

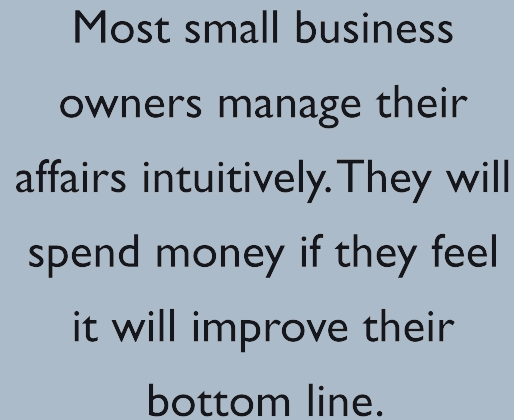
I address this objection by uncovering their true budgeting process.

“Mr. /Ms. Customer, I appreciate you being upfront with me about your budget. I guess my timing is bad. So I can contact you earlier next year,? May I ask when you set your annual budget?” This question will help you determine how formal their budget process is and when your next window of opportunity will open. A good follow up question is, “What led you to choose (insert their choice of media here) to market your business?” Their answer will tell what they want to accomplish with their advertising. If they say, they like the daily newspaper because of the number of people they reach, you know coverage is their “hot button.” You can then proceed to tell them how you can help them achieve their marketing goals without forcing them to expand their budget.

This approach requires the sales person to be well prepared with market information and their paper’s audit data. “Mr. /Ms. Customer I absolutely agree with you. The more people you reach in your target market, the more effective your advertising will be. If there was a

way to double the number of homes you reach here in town without increasing your overall investment, do you think you would attract more customers?”

Of course the customer will answer in the affirmative. “Well I can help you resize your ad in the Daily Competitor from a half page to a quarter page. You’ll still be prominent in



Most small business owners manage their affairs intuitively. They will spend money if they feel it will improve their bottom line.

the paper and this will free up some of your budget to invest in reaching the people in the areas you’re currently missing. This strategy would maintain your prominence in the daily paper and put your message in the homes that don’t subscribe to the daily without increasing your budget. Wouldn’t you agree that this is much better than putting all your eggs in one basket?”

This is an approach that has been used

by radio reps for years to take money out of newspapers and can be very effective. This technique is equally effective with people who have a formal budget and with those who “fly by the seat of their pants.” It works by changing the prospect’s view of their budget as a commitment to one media to an overall investment in the future of their business.

Handling objections is what separates the true sales professional from the order takers. Handling tough objections requires a good understanding of business, advertising and psychology. Being prepared to handle these “unbeatable” objections will help you accomplish the goals that many others believe to be “impossible dreams.”

These three objections represent a tiny fraction of the “tough” objections advertising sales people face every day. If you would like to see other objections addressed in future Link & Learn columns, please forward them to PaperChain Link & Learn c/o janderson@wisad.com. We will collect them and include them in future articles. 📌

This article was written by Jim Busch of the Pittsburgh Pennysaver.

Link & Learn is brought to you every month as part of PaperChain’s® mission to provide educational material to the free paper publishers. If you have an issue you would like to see covered please email janderson@wisad.com, put “Link & Learn” in subject line. Be sure to check out www.paperchain.org for past issues, electronic ready promotional ads and much more to help you remain competitive.



The “News Guru” Speaks

I visited a lot of successful papers in 2015!

– Kevin Slimp

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

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



Kevin points out a design tip with staff members of The Community News in Fergus, Ontario during a visit in November 2015.

Credit: Pat Raftis, The Community News

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 heros. 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 publisher 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
Continued on page 12

Continued from page 11

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 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.



The staff of The Sauk Centre (MN) Herald look on as Kevin explains how to get colors to match between ads.

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.

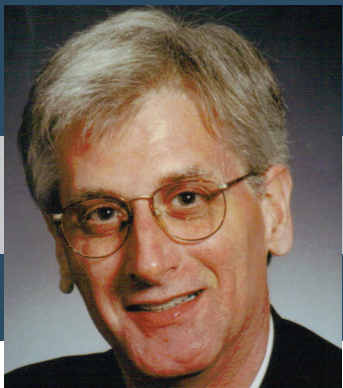
There’s no feel of “centralization” in Wade’s papers. He told me, “Even though we are a group of newspapers, each location focuses on its own community. We are very focused on being local, in both advertising and in news content.”

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. ■■■



Sales Training

Getting Sales Traction

– John Foust

Traction is a key element in any business. Even the business of football.

Many fans remember when the Green Bay Packers hosted the Dallas Cowboys in the 1967 NFL Championship game. The winner would go on to play the AFL's Oakland Raiders in the second Super Bowl. This was the famous "ice bowl," in which the temperature was minus 13 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 25 Celsius) at kickoff. Before the season, Green Bay coach Vince Lombardi had purchased an underground electric grid system that was supposed to keep the field from freezing. But on the day of the game, the system wasn't working, and the field was frozen solid. It was so cold that Frank Gifford, who was announcing the game in an open booth, said, "I think I'll take another bite of my coffee."

Dallas was leading 17-14, when the Packers were facing third and goal on the Cowboys' 1-yard line with 16 seconds remaining. Lombardi called for quarterback Bart Starr to give the ball to the fullback, Chuck Mercein. But Starr didn't want to risk a handoff and decided – without telling anyone in the huddle – to run the ball himself. When guard Jerry Kramer got to the line of scrimmage, he couldn't believe his good fortune in finding a soft patch of turf. It was a foothold. Of course, Kramer threw the key block,

Starr scored, and the Packers won.

It all started with Kramer's foothold, which gave him traction against Jethro Pugh, the Cowboys' superb defensive tackle. To this day, Cowboy fans speculate on what could have happened if Pugh had had the soft patch of turf.

There's a lot of slippery ground in the world of sales. The first step in getting traction is to find the soft spot – the biggest and the best of which is self-interest. British statesman Benjamin Disraeli said, "Talk to a man about himself and he will listen for hours." There's great truth in these words – as long as we are completely sincere in our interest.

Let's look at some foothold areas for sales presentations:

"There's a lot of slippery ground in the world of sales. The first step in getting traction is to find the soft spot – the biggest and the best of which is self-interest."

1. Advance research. Show that you have done your homework on the company. Learn as much as you can before your first meeting. Study the company's website. If it's a retail business, visit one of their stores.

2. On-the-spot research. In your initial appointment, ask a lot of questions. Get facts and opinions. What is the company's marketing history? What kinds of ad campaigns have worked in the past? What hasn't worked? What are their marketing goals?

3. Previous communication. If you've had conversations or an e-mail dialogue with your prospect, that's a good starting point. If you've promised to bring specific information to the meeting, that's even better.

4. Common interest. As long as you keep it brief – and as long as you avoid political topics – this can be a good rapport-building foothold. Did you grow up in the same geographic area? Do you have similar hobbies?

Or...do you share an interest in football? 🏈

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Postal Pieces

Papers Partner with USPS & Mail Mobile Promo Helps Heroes

– Donna Hanbery

When Dan Alexander, publisher and owner of Denton Publications, Inc., and the publisher of Sun Community News and Printing, got up early to attend a postal roundtable at the AFCP annual conference in 2015, he was looking for the latest information on postal service rates, service changes, and promotions.

He 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 Northeastern portion of New York, Alexander values the Postal Service and his relationship with the USPS. He describes the Postal Service as a “vital partner” and “the best distribution system in the world.” He 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 Alexander heard about the Postal Service’s 2015 Mail Drives Mobile Engagement six-

month, two-percent discount incentive program, he recognized an opportunity to do more than just earn a discount for his own paper. Donna Hanbery, executive director of 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 a mailed confirmation and receipt delivered by the USPS.

Alexander 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 PaperChain, 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.

Alexander 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 come to be the sponsored cause for the free paper industry? The story begins with AFCP Executive Director

Loren Colburn. When the Government shutdown occurred a few years ago, 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.

Colburn, 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 America 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. He describes Fisher House Foundation as “the perfect opportunity for hometown America to move the needle to help a good cause in a meaningful way.”

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

So let me return to the diligent efforts of Dan Alexander. He is involved with PaperChain, a combined effort of all free papers to help build the brand of free community papers. PaperChain

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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 within each publication to community news, announcements, and other non-profit or charitable efforts. For PaperChain President John Draper, 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, PaperChain 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 for making 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 com-

plete an online transaction. Alexander made the inquiry about designing an ad and program that could help readers make a contribution to Fisher House. He describes the Postal Service promotion office as being very helpful in answering his inquiries and working to design a program where a true exchange of funds for a contribution was achieved. "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," said Alexander.

PaperChain communicated with its members to promote and describe the Postal Service promotion and the opportunity for publishers who mail to participate in communications to members. PaperChain 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 the Fisher House Foundation would send by mail was required.

PaperChain 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, PaperChain provided some information about Fisher House and the Postal Service.

"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 PaperChain 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."

Alexander has been running the Fisher House ads in every edition of his paper since the promotion period began. He 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."

Alexander 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," he said.

Alexander also believes in the Postal Service. "In our rural market, it surely is our partner," he said. "The Postal Service has been interested in our well being 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." 📍

For further information on the Saturation Mailers Coalition, contact SMC Executive Director Donna Hanbery at 612-340-9350 (voice), 612-340-9446 (fax) or e-mail: Hanbery@hnclaw.com.