

CPF News

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It's Time for a Change!

After three years in Orlando, the Community Papers of Florida (CPF) is returning to a beach location for its 2017 annual conference.

The association is returning to a site where several previous CPF conferences were held – the Marriott Hutchinson Island Resort and Marina.

This resort features a 24-hour fitness center, three heated swimming pools, two outdoor whirlpools, and there is an on-site beach within walking distance. A shuttle service is also provided to the beach. With an eighteen-hole golf course, a putting green, a pitching wedge green, tennis courts, a full-service marina, fishing charters, guided eco tours, nearby state parks and a nearby historical museum, there's plenty to do and see after conference sessions are over.

The conference is scheduled for September 15-16, 2017.

For further details, see the President's Message on page 3. 



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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 \$59.50 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 2017 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

*It's time to put *conference* on your calendar!*

– Farris Robinson

What are the plans for the 2017 Community Papers of Florida (CPF) annual conference?

In short, we are returning to a familiar location where we will enjoy some great food and beverages, have another great program for training, embrace the opportunity to rub elbows with peers in the free paper business, thrill at the chance to win some money, and take home some awards in the annual “Awards for Excellence” competition.

CPF is returning to the Marriot Hutchinson Island Resort & Marina in Stuart on September 15-16. This will be our third visit to this location, which boasts all the recreational activities that made Florida famous. The hotel is located on a marina. Its beach property is a short

distance away, and the hotel provides a shuttle service to the beach and back to the hotel. If you're in the mood to shop, downtown Stuart is a haven for shops and restaurants on the river.

If you want to sharpen up your golf or tennis skills, the hotel is offering attendees complimentary golf balls at the resort’s driving range and unlimited tennis court time, including use of equipment.

The board of directors has appointed a conference committee to start working on the agenda. We are always looking for ideas. If you have some to share, send an email to the CPF office, djneuharth@aol.com.

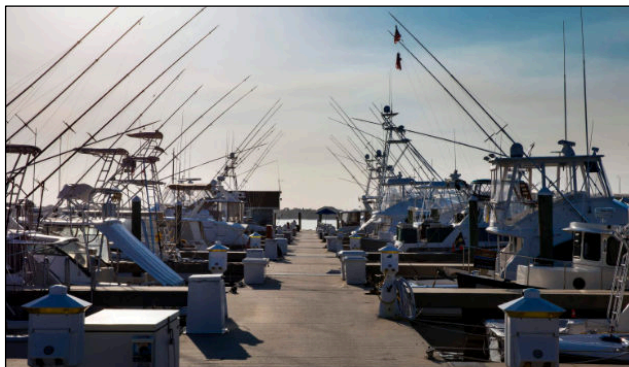
Despite the revenue drop that the association has experienced, CPF is once again going to pick up the lion's share of the costs for those attending.

There will continue to be limits on the number of attendees from each member publication that the association will pay for. Those limits will be included in the registration forms.

At last year's conference, CPF charged those attending \$59.50 per room night. The estimated costs for attending the 2016 conference, including food and beverages, was over \$350 per person. Once again, the board has agreed to charge each member only \$59.50 per room night.

The best way for you to help CPF continue to provide the benefits of a conference is to get involved with the classified network and sell an ad or two. The association benefits and you retain half of the revenue.

I look forward to visiting with you at the annual CPF conference. 🖋️



There's plenty to see and do at the Marriot Hutchinson Island Resort & Marina. Plan to stay a couple of extra days (if you can) to enjoy it all! Boating, golf, tennis.....

Announcements

Rick Robinson named GM of Forum Publishing Group



Richard “Rick” Robinson has been named the general manager of the Forum Publishing Group (FPG) and the west office director of sales in Southeast Florida.

In his new role, Rick will oversee the sales and operations of FPG and the west office local retail sales.

Robinson, a 23-year veteran in advertising sales and business development, comes to the Sun Sentinel Media Group from Houston-based Greensheet Media where, as vice president of sales, he oversaw all of advertising, sales training and digital ad operations, and successfully led the digital transformation of a traditional media company. Previously, Robinson was executive director of digital sales for Hearst’s

Houston Chronicle Media Group, where he oversaw the core digital and digital marketing services teams for the advertising division. Prior to joining Hearst, he was a general manager for AT&T Digital Advertising Solutions and held leadership positions at Dex Media, Southwestern Bell and Pacific Bell Directories. Prior to his career in media, he proudly served in the Air Force and Air National Guard.

“Rick will have a vital role in helping us achieve our revenue goals. I’ve had the pleasure of working with him in the past and I’ve seen firsthand how he improves a sales division on every level. I’m very pleased to have Rick join an already talented team of sales leaders,” said Rob Cravaritis, vice president of advertising for Sun Sentinel, who made the announcement.

FPG publishes 16 community newspapers with a combined circulation of over 700,000. 📍

We do web printing, 24/7, that's the real deal.

Newspaper Printing Co.
5210 S. Lois Ave.
Tampa, FL 33611

813-839-0035

Support CPF's Associate Members!

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MAKE MONEY WITH METRO ONLINE

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WWW.METROCREATIVECONNECTION.COM

TIMELY FEATURES MICROSITES READY-TO-DEPLOY-AND-SELL THEMED SITES

Monetizing your Web site just got easier with these ready-to-deploy-and-sell themed microsites. Heeding the call for online solutions that can deliver immediate results, Metro developed Timely Features Microsites to give publications what they need to support their marketing and promotional efforts in a cost-effective, timely and highly-professional way.

ONLINE AD DESIGN TOOL METRO INTERACTIVE AD DESIGNER (MIAD)

A revolutionary new online application that allows you to make spec ads and finished ads right on screen. All you need is a Web browser and an Internet connection. Unlike other template-based programs, MIAD is content-driven, which gives you unmatched flexibility and control to meet demanding ad requirements. MIAD is easy to use yet delivers sophisticated results.

A customer service commitment...

based on building long-term business relationships.

- Cost-effective web printing solutions
- Web Size Options from 22" to 34"
- On time delivery
- Fast Turnaround
- Full Color or Black and White
- Composition and Design Services

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Trusted Printing Performance

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Announcements

You can support CPF and MAKE MONEY at the same time!

– Just sell ads into the CPF classified network and watch your profits grow.

Sell just 1 ad at the suggested retail price and you'll make

Zone 1

*All papers EXCEPT
The Miami & Tampa Flyers*

\$122.50

Zone 2

*All papers EXCEPT
The Miami Flyer*

\$147.50

Zone 3

*All papers EXCEPT
The Tampa Flyer*

\$172.50

Zone 4

*All papers INCLUDING
The Miami & Tampa Flyers*

\$197.50

If that ad runs 5 times, you'll make

\$612.50

\$737.50

\$862.50

\$987.50

If that ad runs 10 times, you'll make

\$1,225.00

\$1,475.00

\$1,725.00

\$1,975.00

If that single ad runs for 1 year, you'll make

\$6,370.00

\$7,670.00

\$8,970.00

\$10,270.00

Sell just 5 ads per week and in 1 year, you'll make

\$31,850.00

\$38,350.00

\$44,850.00

\$51,350.00

Not sure how to sell a CPF network ad? Training is available! Call 352-237-3409 to schedule yours!



Conference & Hotel Registration Form

September 15-16, 2017, at the Hutchinson Island Marriott Beach Resort & Marina

– Complete & fax to 352-347-3384

Conference Registration

Company: _____

Contact Person: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Is your company a new member of CPF? Yes _____ No _____

Please print the following as you'd like it to appear on your name badge.

NAME: _____

Title: _____

Email: _____

Is this your first CPF Conference? Yes _____ No _____

Number of guests you will be bringing: _____

Management _____ Sales _____ Graphics _____

NAME: _____

Title: _____

Email: _____

Is this your first CPF Conference? Yes _____ No _____

Number of guests you will be bringing: _____

Management _____ Sales _____ Graphics _____

NAME: _____

Title: _____

Email: _____

Is this your first CPF Conference? Yes _____ No _____

Number of guests you will be bringing: _____

Management _____ Sales _____ Graphics _____

The Investment Level Required to Attend

Members Participating in the CPF Classified Network:

- All but \$59.50 of the room cost per night will be deducted from your bill in accordance with the following guidelines:
 - ~ For member publications that **SELL** network classified ads: Up to 100K circulation (that publishes the network classified ads), 2 rooms (with two persons per room, for a total of 4 attendees); 101–300K, 3 rooms (6 attendees); 301–500K, 5 rooms (10 attendees); 501–750K, 6 rooms (12 attendees); 751K–1 million, 7 rooms (14 attendees); and over 1 million circulation, 9 rooms (18 attendees). **Note: Publications that sell classified ads will have first choice in booking rooms through July 17, 2017.** There is a fee of \$59.50 per room per night for up to two nights to cover the room, food, receptions, training and entertainment.

- ~ For member publications that **DO NOT SELL** network classified ads **BUT ONLY PLACE** the ads: Up to 100K circulation (that publishes the network classified ads), 1 room (with two persons, for a total of 2 attendees); 101–300K, 2 rooms (4 attendees); 301–500K, 4 rooms (8 attendees); 501–750K, 5 rooms (10 attendees); 751K–1 million, 6 rooms (12 attendees); and over 1 million circulation, 8 rooms (16 attendees). **Note: Publications that only PLACE classified ads are encouraged to register early, but will be placed on a first-come, first-serve waiting list until July 24, 2017.** There is a fee of \$59.50 per room per night for up to two nights to cover the room, food, receptions, training and entertainment.

- CPF will pay for your rooms in accordance with the established 2017 guidelines (above) for TWO NIGHTS ONLY (either Thursday & Friday OR Friday & Saturday). If you wish to stay an additional night, you may do so at your own expense.

- **A credit card is required to make your reservation.** It will be charged the \$59.50 per room per night fee on or after July 17, 2017 (for publications that SELL the network ads) or on or after July 24, 2017 (for publications that only PLACE but do not sell the network ads).

- Member publications may continue to send as many members as they wish to the conference, but they will be charged the FULL COST of attendance for each member that exceeds the guidelines. **Note:** Guests (including children) attending with a member are counted in the above totals.

- Publications may make credit-card-secured reservations through July 31, 2017. After that, room reservations will be accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis until the allocated rooms are filled. Once the room block is full, all late registrations must pay for their own hotel rooms.

- **The absolute cutoff date for hotel registrations is August 11, 2017.**

Associate Members & Members Not Running the CPF Network Ads:

- All costs associated with attending the conference, including a \$60 registration fee, all hotel room charges and meals, are your responsibility.

Hotel Registration ~ Payment Section

Credit Card # _____

Expiration Date: _____ Code: _____

Type: MasterCard _____ VISA _____

Name on Card: _____

Billing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

I understand that I am responsible for \$59.50 per room per night plus all charges made to my room. I also understand that in the event I do not show up at conference or cancel my room reservation by calling CPF at 352-237-3409 no later than September 11, my signature below authorizes CPF and/or the Marriott Hutchinson Island Resort & Marina to charge the full cost of my room to my credit card.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Hotel Registration ~ Please complete one per room:

ROOM IN NAME OF: _____

Check in Date: _____ Check Out Date: _____

Special dietary or access needs: _____

If two or more conference attendees are rooming together, list roommate(s) here: _____

ROOM IN NAME OF: _____

Check in Date: _____ Check Out Date: _____

Special dietary or access needs: _____

If two or more conference attendees are rooming together, list roommate(s) here: _____

ROOM IN NAME OF: _____

Check in Date: _____ Check Out Date: _____

Special dietary or access needs: _____

If two or more conference attendees are rooming together, list roommate(s) here: _____



PaperChain Link & Learn

Handling Objections

– Jim Busch

Part One:

“An Ounce of Prevention”

One of the biggest challenges in writing a monthly column like this for more than a decade is coming up with fresh subjects to cover.

Therefore, when I am doing a conference or doing consulting work, I always ask salespeople what they want me to cover. Invariably, the first thing I hear is, “Objections, we need help handling objections!”

Objections are a fact of life for anyone who makes their living selling anything. If the truth be told, objections are the reason that the world needs sales people. If there were no objections, companies could just send out order forms, sort of a symbiotic relationship with objections, much like lions and gazelles. Individual gazelles hate lions but they need them. If there were no lions the gazelles would soon eat all the grass and disappear. Likewise, the lions wish the gazelles would just stand there and not run away when it was time for the lion’s lunch. The

swiftness of the gazelles keep the lions fit and sharp. They must work for every meal they get.

Handling objections keeps salespeople sharp. Objections provide an opportunity to learn about their prospect’s concerns and how to demonstrate the value offered by their products. In this month’s Link and Learn we look at objections – overcoming them and preventing them.

The dictionary defines “objection” as “1) A reason or argument, offered in disagreement, opposition, refusal, or disapproval. 2) A feeling of disapproval, dislike or disagreement.” Anyone who has spent more than twenty minutes as a sales person may have a few more words to add to this definition. Unpacking this definition offers some insights into handling objections.

At its core, an objection is disagreement between two people. The sales person feels that advertising in their paper will produce more than enough revenue to justify the purchase, and the prospect is not so sure. Theoretically, countering an objection is a simple matter of providing evidence of your product’s value to convince the prospect to change their mind.

This is where we run into the second part of the definition, a “feeling” of disapproval. We like to think of ourselves as a logical, thoughtful species, but we are much more like Captain Kirk

than Mr. Spock. Psychologists have found that our emotions play a much larger role in the human decision making process than most of us are willing to admit. Our emotions hold veto power over our decisions. This is why customers will still say no when all the facts support a decision to purchase the proposed program.

On the flip side, people almost never go against their “gut.” Even when faced with an overwhelming preponderance of data to the contrary, we seldom will make a decision that doesn’t “feel” right to us. We must win both the “hearts” and the “minds” of our prospects if we want them to buy from us.

A study conducted by Huthwaite Inc. found a direct relationship between the number of objections offered by a prospect and the success of a salesperson calling on them. This is not surprising, but the Huthwaite study also found that the skill of the salesperson in countering the objections had no impact on the outcome of the call. They found that rather than countering customer objections, the most successful salespeople were able to prevent objections during the sales call.

The Huthwaite study, which was conducted by observing thousands of sales calls, found that

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PaperChain Link & Learn Continued

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the most effective sales people employed a strategic approach to selling. They used a proactive approach which nipped objections in the bud by addressing the customer's concerns before they came up during the call.

Money may not be the root of all evil, but it is the root of all objections. If we were in the business of giving advertising away, every edition of our papers would all be about a foot thick.

Going into a call, a salesperson's goal is to get the prospect to spend their money on an ad, and the prospect's goal is to hold on to their hard-won cash. This does not mean that prospects are unwilling to spend their money; it means that they need to believe that it will be well spent. To "believe" means that they not only "know" (in their head) that buying advertising is a good idea, but they also "feel" (in their gut) that they are making the right decision.

As salespeople, we are under a lot of pressure to "get it done," to close the sale, to achieve our sales goals. On a call, we are impatient to know if we are going to make the sale. I've observed thousands of sales calls as a manager and sales trainer. The most common mistake I've seen salespeople make is trying to close before the customer was ready to buy. This is a critical error.

Once you have thrown out a price and the customer has said, "NO!", it is extremely difficult to get them to change their mind. Clever prospects know this and will set a trap for inexperienced sales people by feigning interest

and saying, "How much is an ad?" Rookies interpret this as a buying signal and quickly quote a price. Even if the sales person says, "a full page is only three cents," the prospect will say, "that's too much!", leaving the sales person with nowhere to go except out the door.

In sales, as in life, timing is everything. In the scenario described above the experienced salesperson will not allow themselves to be boxed into a corner by prematurely quoting a price. They will respond to this trick by saying, "I'm glad to see you're interested in my paper, but I can't possibly give you a quote until I know a little more about your business and your needs. Let me ask you a few questions and I'll be able to propose a program that is right for you."

Experienced salespeople know that selling is a sequential process. The first step is to introduce yourself to the customer; the second step is to probe the customer to discover their business needs; the third step is to propose a solution to the customer's problems; finally, the sales rep can close the sale. A good sales person does not allow themselves to be distracted from following this structured process.

The advantage of following the sales process is that it removes the "flashpoints" where a customer may bring up an objection. Objections occur when the salesperson tries to impose their will on the prospect. They may choose not to talk to us, so objections can crop up during the call opening. (This will be addressed in Part 2.) When done properly, there is little risk of getting

an objection in the discovery and solution steps. Rather than giving the prospect a "pitch," these two steps engage the prospect in conversation.

The goal of the discovery phase of the call is to learn about the customer's individual situation and needs, so they should be doing most of the talking. The salesperson should listen carefully and direct the flow of the conversation with good questions. In addition to gathering the information needed to formulate an advertising program, this process builds rapport with the prospect.

Letting the customer talk and listening to them demonstrates your respect for them and your interest in their problems. Everyone likes to talk about themselves and their interests. Letting the customer do most of the talking gives them a positive feeling which will be transferred to the sales rep. Reps who dominate the conversation will be perceived in a negative light.

The "solutions" stage should begin with a recap of the needs uncovered during discovery, "Mr./Ms. Prospect, thank you for giving me so much information about your business. Just to make sure I understand your situation, please let me review what you told me. You said..." The phrase, "You said," gives the customer ownership of the problem and will increase their desire to find a solution. This stage could also be described as "selling in principle." Before offering a specific product and quoting a price, the sales rep should secure the prospect's agreement on need for a solution.

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For example, rather than saying, “I recommend a quarter page ad with a BOGO coupon for X dollars,” the rep should say, “Mr./Ms. Prospect, you said that you are very slow at the beginning of the week. Do you think if you offered a discount good Monday through Wednesday that you’d attract more customers?” If the customer nods in agreement, they have been sold on the idea of advertising and all that remains is hashing out the details of the program.

By following the process, you can use the customer’s words to close the sale. “Mr./Ms. Prospect, you said that you’ve been slow early in the week and that you believe a BOGO offer would help you turn this around. Here’s what I would do if I were you, I’d run a quarter page featuring a coupon for buy one dinner, get one, good only Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Our paper reaches thousands of diners right here in Ourtown, so I think this would really bring in a lot of new customers. Don’t you agree?”

Note the number of times this sales rep referenced the customer’s remarks. The customer will be much less likely to object to something they have said than something they’ve heard from a sales person. This statement does not include the price of the recommended program, which requires the prospect to ask, “How much would that cost me?”

At this point in the call, asking for the price is a genuine buying signal and offers the rep a chance to position the value of their product.

“Mr./Ms. Prospect, you can reach over X thousand homes with your BOGO offer in a big quarter page for only X dollars. That’s just pennies per home. Do you want to start your ad next week?” You may still get an objection at this point, but they are generally easier to address. If the customer has been sold in principle on advertising, objections are more likely to be negotiating points rather than “deal breakers.”

We’ve all heard the old proverb, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” This is especially true when it comes to handling objections. Having the discipline to stick to a structured sales process in the face of internal and external pressures is the mark of a true professional. By following the time-proven sales sequential process and resisting the powerful urge to jump ahead to the close, we can greatly reduce the number of objections we receive and increase the number of sales we close.

Part Two: “Winning Hearts, Minds and Dollars”

In Part One, we discussed how using good sales techniques to position the value of your products can address a prospect’s concerns before they come up as objections. Although adhering to a sales process that engages the customer and encourages them to reveal business needs that your products can solve will greatly reduce the number of objections, unfortunately, it doesn’t always work. Sales

people need to be prepared to respond to a customer’s objections.

Note that you should “respond” to a customer’s objections rather than try to “counter” them. Your goal is not to “win” an argument, but rather you should seek to “win over” the customer. Taking an adversarial approach will only alienate the prospect, force them to defend their position, and strengthen their resolve not to purchase advertising. The sales person must never forget that the prospect always retains the right to say “yes” or “no.” If we are to make a sale, we need to help the prospect see the issue in a different light so that they will change their mind on their own.

Objections arise when the sales person asks the prospect for one of two things, both of which they value greatly: their time or their money. Objections often occur at the very beginning of a call, sometimes before the sales person has even identified themselves. We walk in the door and are greeted with a stern look and a “*not interested*.”

In saying this, the prospect is not referring to advertising in your paper. They are telling you that they are “*not interested*” in talking to another blankety-blank sales person. Our prospects are constantly besieged by hundreds of sales reps offering them a wide variety of products and services. If a prospect took time out to listen to every sales person that called on them, they would have little time left to run their business.

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Furthermore, most of the sales people that they do agree to meet have little to offer them. The majority of sales reps launch directly into a sales pitch, touting the virtues of their products and telling the prospect why they should buy them. They do not show them the respect to inquire about their business needs and their concerns before offering to “rock their world.”

If someone appeared in your home uninvited and began ranting about how great they are and asking you for some of your hard-earned cash, you would most certainly show them the door, so it is understandable why most prospects are “not interested” in talking to salespeople.

The key to handling an immediate “*not interested*” objection is to differentiate yourself from the typical salesperson. The instinctive response to this objection is to try to push through it, “Mr. Customer, I’m sure if you allow me to show what we have to offer, you’ll see...” This old school “foot in the door” approach only hardens the prospect’s resolve to see your backside going out their front door.

A less confrontational approach is much more effective in dealing with these call-opening objections. Since you have not proposed anything as yet, this is not a true objection. Even the prospect has no idea what they are objecting to, they simply do not want to suffer through another sales pitch and you should give them exactly what they want. Let the customer win this one by saying, “*Oh, I’m sorry to hear*

that, but I know that advertising in my paper isn’t for everyone. I appreciate your honesty and that you’re not wasting my time.”

This shows respect for the customer, and that you are accepting rather than challenging their statement. You are also praising them for being upfront with you. This practice also demonstrates that you are not interested in wasting anyone’s time. Since most sales people will try to push through this objection, your passive response will surprise the prospect and put them a bit off balance.

The next step is to “notice” something in their place of business and open a discussion. For example, when calling on a restaurant you might say something like, “*Something smells delicious. Do you offer carry out at dinnertime?*” By doing this you begin to engage the customer in a conversation that allows you to slip seamlessly into probing them for their business needs.

It helps to do your research before the call so that you can open with something like, “I saw something on your website (customers love it when you mention their website) that I was curious about. Could you tell me...” You’ll find that you will get very few objections during the discovery portion of the sales call. Most business people like to talk about their business and themselves. You will begin to meet resistance when you propose a program and try to close a sale.

As a young salesperson (a long time ago), I was taught the “Feel-Felt-Found” method of

handling objections. “Ms. Prospect, I understand why you FEEL our prices are too high. Many of my customers FELT that way in the past, but they FOUND that our products are really a great value considering the results they got from their ad.” Though this technique is a bit simplistic for today’s sophisticated prospects, it is based on a sound understanding of sales psychology.

I FEEL Your Pain

Legendary business consultant Peter Drucker once said, “The biggest problem with communication is the illusion that it has taken place.” It is vital that before responding to an objection, that we fully understand what the customer is saying and how they feel about the issue.

For example, I was working with a salesperson when their prospect said, “*I advertised in the XYZ Gazette (our competitor) and I didn’t get a single phone call. It was a huge waste of money.*” Our sales rep quickly launched into a list of reasons why businesses should advertise. When the customer spoke, she heard, “*Advertising isn’t worth the money,*” but I wasn’t so sure.

I jumped in and asked him, “You said the XYZ didn’t work. Why do you think that is?” He told me, “*Well their papers are delivered all over the area, while my customers come from around here and they don’t hit a lot of homes in this neighborhood.*” I followed up with, “Do you think if you could target your ad to all of the homes in this neighborhood, it would produce

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results?” When he answered affirmatively, I went on to explain how, as a direct-mailed community paper, we could do just that and closed the sale.

Before attempting to answer an objection, you should ask questions to confirm that you fully understand it from the customer’s point of view. Many people tell you one thing when they actually mean something else.

One of the most common objections is, “*I don’t have the money to advertise.*” This is sometimes the case but more often the customer is really saying, “I don’t see the value of what you’re offering.” This explains why simply lowering the price or going to a smaller program seldom wins the sale. They use the “price” rather than the “value” objection because it is hard to argue about how much cash they have on hand, theoretically making this an “unbeatable objection.” Also, most people are too nice to insult you by telling you they think your product is worthless.

Since many emotions play a big part in the decision-making process, it is just as important to gauge how a prospect feels about an issue, as it is to know what they think about it. Asking good questions gives you all the information you need to address the objection. This process also makes resolving the objection a cooperative rather than an adversarial process.

It is also important to pay close attention to the customer’s tone of voice. Their tone indicates

how they truly “feel” about the issue at hand more so than the literal content of their words. An angry or confrontational tone indicates a much deeper problem than a concern over pricing. In this case, you cannot proceed until you discover the root of their feelings toward your products.

The direct approach is the best way to handle such emotionally charged situations by saying, “Mr. Customer, I sense that you have some serious concerns about our paper. May I ask what they are?” This shows the customer that they have your full attention and you are genuinely interested in their concerns.

Others Have FELT That Way

The second part of the process serves several purposes. First, it further validates the customer’s feelings that, “they are not the only one who feels this way.” This step also opens up the possibility of change for the customer.

Very few people are so enlightened that they willingly admit that they were wrong. This, coupled with our natural dislike of being told what to do, makes getting a prospect to say “Yes” to you after they have already said “No” extremely difficult. Even if the prospect sees the value of your offering after they have turned you down, they will stand firm to protect their ego. This is why it is important not to force a prospect into taking a firm position, which they will defend like it was the gates of the Alamo. By describing how others felt the same way and changed their mind makes doing so far more

palatable. The customer must believe that they have changed their mind of their own free will.

What They FOUND Was...

Plumbers, electricians and other repair people all drive vans or trucks packed with the tools of their trade and the parts they need to handle any problem they might encounter. Likewise, smart sales people always carry with them everything they need to “fix” a problem. Rather than hammers, pliers and valves, our tool kit includes research, our products and testimonials.

You should always have your audit and circulation information within easy reach to present to a customer. Most people think in terms of stories and not in numbers, so it is important to present your data in a narrative form.

For example, instead of saying, “60% of our readers have an income in excess of \$60K,” you should say, “Since our circulation includes Richburg and Bucksburp, our readership is very desirable and quite affluent. Did you know that over 60% of our readers make more than \$60K?”

This bias towards information in a narrative format is why testimonials are your most powerful tool for responding to objections. Prospects are understandably skeptical of anything a sales person says. They are much more inclined to believe their fellow business people.

You should equip yourself with a battery of testimonials from your company’s satisfied customers. You can deliver these orally, but written testimonials are far more effective.

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PaperChain Link & Learn Continued

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As a sales person, I often asked my regular customers to give me testimonial letters to use on sales calls. I kept these in a notebook paired with photos of my customers and their businesses. This notebook proved to be my most powerful selling tool.

Bring It All Together

Here's how this process works:

Customer: "I don't really want to spend the money right now."

Rep: "Ms. Prospect, I can understand how you feel. Many of my customers tell me that they

are careful where they invest their money these days. I sense that you have some other concerns about our paper, may I ask what they are?"

Customer: "Well...I'm not sure that many people still read a local paper anymore. Everybody seems to do everything online these days."

Rep: "I can understand how you feel. My whole life is on my phone, but my customers tell me that a lot of people still use the paper to find local businesses. Take a look at what Mike at the Jones Hardware told me."

It's a Tough Job But...

Every sales person encounters objections from

their prospects and no sales person can overcome every challenge. True sales professionals are prepared for anything their prospects throw at them. They take the time to listen to their clients and try to understand the situation from their point of view. These top performers know that if they use good sales techniques to respond, rather than react, to the roadblocks put in their way, they will be able to overcome most objections and close more sales. 📌

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The "News Guru" Speaks

What I Learned in Ohio

– Kevin Slimp

Convention season is an interesting time in the life of a speaker. Most years, I'll travel directly from one convention to the next between late January and June. Some years, the travel doesn't slow until July or August.

I've purposely cut my travel this year, to make time for a couple of new projects I've begun. That's a primary reason I'm enjoying convention appearances so much this year.

I just returned from Columbus, Ohio, where I spoke to the Ohio Newspaper Association. Actually, I believe they officially changed their name a few minutes before I came to the stage. Either way, they are still "ONA."

After more than 20 years of speaking, you would think I would be past being surprised by audiences. It's become the norm for groups to add seats at the last minute when I'm speaking about the state of newspapers, but it still surprises me for some reason.

A steady stream of attendees lined up to ask

for a few moments to visit following my speech. With five hours to kill before my flight home, I offered to find a place near the registration table to meet with folks for a few minutes each.

I attempted to spend as much time as possible answering the questions of each person, while cognizant others were waiting in line for their turns.

I can't tell you how much it pleases me to meet with publishers and others who see a real future for their newspapers and attend conferences, classes, read journals and even stand in line to gain insight into ways to improve their operations and products.

What was on the mind of Ohio's newspaper leaders? The discussions varied, but most centered around ways to improve their newspapers and the methods used to get them out. "Should we outsource our ad design?"

This came up more than once. At one point, a group of us gathered around a table and discussed options to get the best results for their small community papers.

The possibility of a joint "co-op," where small newspapers in adjoining communities
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The "News Guru" Speaks Continued

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might work together, giving them more control over the creative process while sharing in the expenses came up.

We discussed the best options for outsourcing, for papers who feel this is the best option for them. Should they use designers who are part of a huge national group, a company outside the country, or a smaller group who might offer more personalized attention?

Should we keep everything “in house,” finding ways to combine different areas of pre-press production that benefit our papers?

Like most important questions in life, the quickest answer is often not the best. I reminded publishers to consider long-term effects of their decisions. Are we risking long-term success for the sake of short-term savings?

A new publisher asked advice about several areas, including the design of the paper itself. I suggested taking advantage of as much reading, online training and local training opportunities as possible. The publisher of a community newspaper wears many hats and it’s easy to become overwhelmed by the sheer amount of added work when the job title changes from editor, or ad manager, to publisher.

Several editors and publishers asked me to look

over their papers and make suggestions. I laughed when one said, “Wow! You’re really good at this.”


I told her it was like anything else. After you’ve done it a few thousand times, you get pretty good at it.

Like most places I visit, large papers are trying to find new ways to attract advertising dollars and readers. When asked, my advice was to remember what readers want, because readers and advertisers go hand in hand.

Smaller papers have their own set of issues. For the past century or more, newspapers in smaller communities have dealt with many of the same issues as their larger counterparts. In addition, competition from nearby metros looking for new readers is increasingly creating more competition between metros and nearby community papers.

I was glad to see fire in the belly of Ohio’s newspaper community. I visited with reporters who are passionate about their calling, editors and ad managers serious about improving their products and service, and publishers who still feel confident about the future.

Convention season always seems to come at the right time. After spending a couple of months working from my office, convention season reminds me our industry is alive and well, and will be for decades to come.

That’s one reason I love my job so much. 

Kevin Slimp is CEO of newspaperacademy.com and director of The Newspaper Institute. Contact Kevin at kevin@kevinslimp.com.

The collage features several key elements:

- TRADITIONAL JOURNALISM**: A graphic with a typewriter and the text "Is It Old News?".
- STOP THE PRESS**: A headline about "THE DEATH OF THE NEWSPAPER IN INDIA".
- DEATH**: A large headline for a 60-minute feature on "Times-Picayune".
- AMERICA'S TOP 25 PAPER**: A chart showing circulation trends.
- 48 Hour Books**: A snippet about a new book release.
- Coroner's audit follows two good reviews**: A snippet about a local audit.
- EXPENDITURES NEWSPAPER AT**: A chart showing spending trends.
- PEOPLE ARE**: A snippet about industry trends.
- THE NEWS IS**: A snippet about news content.
- AMERICA**: A snippet titled "Big Newspapers Are Booming: 'Washington Post' To Add 60".

What did I take away from my day in Columbus?

Ohio is an interesting place to be in the newspaper business. There are several big cities, meaning there are more metro papers than in most states.

Sales Training

9 Ways to Use Numbers in Headlines

– John Foust



Whether on a printed page, monitor or mobile device, the headline is the most important part of an ad. It tells the reader what the ad is about.

With the blink of an eye, he or she decides whether it's worth the effort to keep reading.

Numbers can help you create compelling headlines, as long as they are specific and relevant. Here are a few examples. Note that these numbers as expressed as digits, not words:

1. “Only 6 townhomes left.” Using a specific number, rather than saying “they’re going fast,” communicates proof of scarcity. As sales increase, the countdown should continue. You can also use this technique to indicate time: “Only 8 days left.”

2. “Save \$1,000 on new carpet.” A specific dollar amount is easier to visualize than “a lot.” It’s worth mentioning that this headline works better with a verb (“save”) than with a passive phrase like, “\$1,000 discount on new carpet.”

3. “Save 25 percent on Merino wool sweaters.” This is a variation of the dollar tactic

in the carpet headline. The difference is that a percentage indicates proportion. Of course, the body copy should indicate the dollar amounts of the 25 percent.

4. “According to XYZ Survey, we rank number 1 in parts availability.” If this kind of headline isn’t supported by evidence, it won’t have an ounce of credibility.

I remember a car dealer who ran ads claiming to be “number one.” Not surprisingly, other dealers countered with claims that *they* were number one. The problem was that it was a blanket statement, with no facts to back it up.

5. “4 out of 5 dentists recommend...” This line was made famous by a brand of sugar-free chewing gum. Before you use this kind of testimonial evidence, make sure you are quoting a legitimate survey.


6. “1,500 widgets sold so far this year.” Years ago, this tactic was used by McDonald’s. Right there on the golden arches sign was the message “Over 240 billion sold.” It was a big joke to say you were so hungry that you were going to make the number change.

Other examples of quantity-headlines include, “We’ve sold 26 homes in the past 3 months;”

“Last year, we helped 3,425 students pass their college entrance exams;” and “Since we opened our doors, we’ve paved over 1,000 miles of driveways.”

7. “5 ways to cut your electric bill.” This headline promises important information about a specific problem. It would certainly get the attention of anyone wanting to reduce energy costs.

8. “In your area, there is a house break-in every 32 minutes.” Here’s an example of a headline that creates a sense of urgency. Again, make sure the advertiser – in this case a home security company – uses verifiable figures.

9. “28 years of dry cleaning experience.” This headline equates years with expertise. Another way to sell experience is to add the number of working years of the people who work there: “Our staff has 191 years of experience.” 

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