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"Awards for Excellence" competition enters the Digital Age

You've been requesting it for years, and it's finally happened: CPF's annual "Awards for Excellence" competition has gone digital!

Yes, you read that right. No more paper entries! No more poster boards and glue sticks! No more

overnight fees!

The competition is now open to start uploading your entries. There is a \$50 entry fee, and a \$1 fee for each uploaded graphic file.

An email containing a link to the closed competition is simultaneously being sent to all CPF publishers, along with a document containing

instructions on how to access and use the new digital entry system. The instruction document will also be available in the members-only section of the CPF website for the duration of the contest.

See page 5 for this year's contest categories. The deadline for entries is Monday, July 31, 2017. 🖋️

It's not too early to start planning Free Paper Month activities!

What are YOU going to do to celebrate Free Paper Month in July?

It's not too early to start planning activities that will both involve and inform your readers. While those of us in the Free Paper Industry recognize the valuable service free papers offer to our advertisers and readers, the only way to ensure that *they*



recognize our value is to toot our own horn. See page 11 for some great ideas to start planning now.

Please use the Free Community Paper Month logo often on your mast head, folios, promotional ads, articles and as fillers throughout your paper leading up to and during the month of July. For original artwork and PDF's of the artwork, visit <http://paperchain.org/freepapermonth.html> 🖋️

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

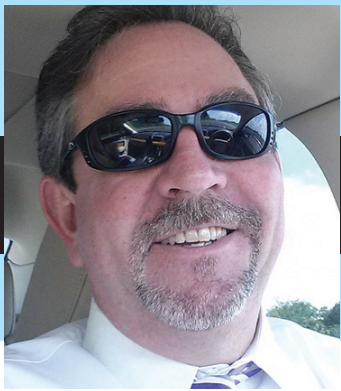


Member Benefits

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

We're looking forward to conference!

— Farris Robinson

We are looking ahead to the annual Community Papers of Florida (CPF) conference scheduled September 15-16 at the Hutchinson Island Marriott Resort & Marina near Stuart.

The conference committee is working on the agenda, but we can tell you the goal is to make it worthwhile for you and your team members to attend.

The conference focus is going to be classified sales. If we listen to some of the publishers that attended the recent AFCP conference in Louisville, Kentucky, classifieds are not dead. Some papers have made efforts to recapture some of this revenue and we want to share some of these opportunities at the annual conference.

Longtime CPF member Peter Lamb will attend to share his knowledge on this subject. Peter

currently has clients all around the world that he trains on this subject.

We also plan to have some of CPF's top selling telemarketers attend and share their knowledge on selling. The session will include selling network classified ads.

It's time to get to work and plan your entries for the "Awards for Excellence" graphic and editorial awards competition.

The good news is that this year you don't have to make copies of each award, place them in a package, and send them to the CPF office. Barbara Holmes has set up the software to enable you to enter the competition online. An overview of how to do so is on page 5 of this newsletter, and detailed directions (with screen shots) are in the members-only section of the CPF website. If you have any questions or need to have the directions emailed directly to you, give Barb a call.

We are looking forward to the "Awards for

Excellence Banquet" to honor the editorial and graphic talent we have in this association.

In these difficult economic times for CPF, the board of directors once again has agreed to charge each attending member \$59.50 per night for rooms. This applies to members that publish the network classified ads.

Resort fees, parking, training, Internet access, the cost of food and over 50% of the room fees will be paid by CPF.

Add in the fact that the conference facility has golf opportunities, putting greens, a great swimming pool and access to the beach, and you can look forward to a great weekend.

Place September 15-16 on your calendar and fill out the registration form included in this newsletter now!

We look forward to meeting with you in Stuart. 🌐



Announcements

CPF Members Win Big at AFCP's Conference!



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Tower Publications in Gainesville picked up the most awards in the annual Association of Free Community Papers (AFCP) "Best of the Best" awards competition at the recent conference in Louisville, Kentucky.

Tower picked up a total of 18 awards in the national competition, including seven first place honors.

Hometown News brought home six awards; the Florida Mariner picked up four awards, including one first place honor; and The Flyer won three awards, including one for first place.

Ocean Media Solutions in Stuart won the top honor for most improved publication printed on stock.

This year's contest included over 1,300 entries in 90 different publishing categories as well as an ad design contest that required specific advertiser criteria. The entries represented AFCP publications from all across North America. 🌐

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Awards for Excellence

2017 Contest Categories

Entries are due by Monday, July 31, 2017!

1. EDITORIAL

- 1a. **PERSONAL COLUMN** – A column, written by the publisher or a member of his/her staff, covering any topic.
- 1b. **BEST EDITORIAL** on a subject of local community interest which best expresses a hometown allegiance.
- 1c. **NEWS STORY** – A written rendering of a newsworthy event. Include byline.
- 1d. **BEST ORIGINAL WRITING** for a human interest or feature article.

2. PHOTOGRAPHY

- 2a. **BEST ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPH** used for a feature or general interest story, a community news event or a sports event.
- 2b. **BEST ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SPREAD** for a feature or general interest story, community news event or sports event.
- 2c. **BEST INDEPENDENT PHOTO FEATURE** – Photo with a tag line but no story.

3. SALES PROMOTION

- 3a. **SELF PROMOTION IN PAPER** – Advertising in your paper that promotes the use of your paper by advertisers or acceptance by readers. Includes testimonials.
- 3b. **OTHER SELF PROMOTION** – Includes flyers, mailers, media kits, electronic media, etc.

4. RETAIL ADVERTISING

(All Retail Advertising [products and/or services] other than Automotive, Real Estate, Dining & Entertainment, or Professional Services.)

- 4a. **FULL COLOR/PROCESS (1/2 PAGE OR MORE)**
- 4b. **FULL COLOR/PROCESS (LESS THAN 1/2 PAGE)**

5. AUTOMOTIVE ADVERTISING

- 5a. **FULL COLOR/PROCESS (1/2 PAGE OR MORE)**
- 5b. **FULL COLOR/PROCESS (LESS THAN 1/2 PAGE)**

6. REAL ESTATE ADVERTISING

- 6a. **FULL COLOR/PROCESS (1/2 PAGE OR MORE)**
- 6b. **FULL COLOR/PROCESS (LESS THAN 1/2 PAGE)**

7. DINING & ENTERTAINMENT ADVERTISING

- 7a. **FULL COLOR/PROCESS (1/2 PAGE OR MORE)**
- 7b. **FULL COLOR/PROCESS (LESS THAN 1/2 PAGE)**

8. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES ADVERTISING

(Limited to Lawyers, Medical Professionals, Financial, Insurance and Political Ads)

- 8a. **FULL COLOR/PROCESS (1/2 PAGE OR MORE)**
- 8b. **FULL COLOR/PROCESS (LESS THAN 1/2 PAGE)**

9. B&W AND/OR SPOT COLOR ADS

(Any ad from categories 4 through 8 that is done in either black & white or with spot color, in any size.)

- 9a. **BLACK & WHITE**
- 9b. **SPOT COLOR**

10. MIXED CATEGORIES

- 10a. **THEME PROMOTION** – A common theme for a group of businesses such as car care, home improvement, holiday themes, strip malls, etc.
- 10b. **ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN** – Multiple ads for a single client using continuity of theme/artwork.
- 10c. **IN-HOUSE PRODUCED ADVERTISING INSERT** – Either single sheet or more than single sheet.

11. COVER DESIGN

- 11a. **BEST SHOPPER COVER DESIGN**
- 11b. **BEST COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER COVER DESIGN**
- 11c. **BEST SPECIAL SECTION COVER DESIGN – NEWS-PRINT**
- 11d. **BEST SPECIAL SECTION COVER DESIGN – GLOSSY**

12. INTERNET / WEB PAGE

- 12a. **BEST INTERNET HOME SITE** design & presentation. (Submit a screen shot of your home page.)

13. JUDGE'S CHOICE AND BEST OF SHOW

- 13a. **JUDGE'S CHOICE** – This award will be presented by each judge for his/her favorite entry. Separate entries in this category are not accepted.
- 13b. **BEST OF SHOW** – The judges will choose the winner of this category from all entries received. Separate entries in this category are not accepted. 🏆



Conference & Hotel Registration Form

Sept. 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 information 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 Hutchinson Island Marriott Beach 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: _____



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 August 1, 2016 through July 31, 2017. 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 August 1, 2017. 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): _____



PaperChain Update

Selling Against Marriage Mail

— Jim Busch

Recently, I had a call from a publisher asking for my thoughts on selling against a “Marriage Mail” competitor. These mailing companies provide advertisers with a low-cost alternative to doing their own mailings.

Marriage mail is very popular with both national and local advertisers. These companies are a serious competitor for free and community papers. As the national advertisers cut back on print advertising, many of these companies are actively pursuing the small local and regional accounts that make up our traditional customer base. To successfully compete with the marriage mail industry, we need to understand their business model, as well as their strengths and weaknesses. In this month’s Link & Learn, we will look at marriage mail and offer some strategies for protecting your customer base and taking away accounts from our direct mail competitors.

Marriage mail is packets of advertising flyers which are delivered through the U.S. Mail. These companies take advantage of the way the postal service prices their service. The best way to understand this is to imagine you want to send

a letter to a friend across the country. (Believe it or not, some people still do this even in our digitally obsessed age!) If you are just dropping them a short one page note, the stamp will cost you \$0.49. If you have a lot that you want to say and add several more pages your mailing, the cost will remain the same. You would almost have to write the great American novel and send

The remnant ads, which are either inserted into the packet or printed on the “wrap” surrounding it, often look like fugitives from a 3 a.m. cable TV infomercial.

it to your friend to go over the one ounce limit for a first-class letter. Even when you go over an ounce, you don’t have to buy a second full price stamp as each additional ounce will only cost you \$0.21. This pricing structure is based on the cost structure of delivering the mail. While most people assume that transporting the mail is the costliest component of delivering the mail, routing and handling the mail is much more expensive.

Because the cost of mailing a marriage mail packet does not directly correspond with the weight of the packet, this mailing format has a strong incentive to deliver as many pieces as possible. Adding additional pieces increases their profits without affecting their mailing cost. For this reason, these companies offer significant discounts to large national firms.

When their packets are “light,” they offer some advertisers a “remnant rate,” allowing them to deliver their pieces at a very low cost.

The primary way that consumers evaluate any advertising is to look at the content. Many grocery chains use marriage mail to deliver their weekly sales flyers. Marriage mail sales people often point to these accounts as “proof of readership,” saying that “everyone eats” and “everyone goes to the grocery store.” What they don’t like to talk about are the other ads that come along with the food ads.

The remnant ads, which are either inserted into the packet or printed on the “wrap” surrounding it, often look like fugitives from a 3 a.m. cable TV infomercial. I have seen a wide variety of pitches for “Collector Plates,” questionable insurance plans and cheap kid’s toys in the packet delivered to my home. These small

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Continued from page 8

ads tend to fall annoyingly to my feet when I try to remove it from my mailbox. These ads tend to reinforce the average consumer's perception of these packets as "junk mail." I have asked a number of people about this and the majority of them said that they pull out the grocery ads and seldom look at the rest of the package. These packets usually contain only a few other local advertisers from a few retail categories.

This means that compared to a local community paper, they have little to offer the typical consumer. Just as being in a busy shopping area with a variety of different types of stores benefits a retailer, being in a publication with lots to choose from attracts more shoppers. It pays to ask your employees, friends and relatives to save their marriage mail packets so that you can analyze them and discuss their content with advertisers.

Consumers see the local paper as an important part of their community. This is true for both publications that include local editorial content and those that contain 100% advertising. People consider local content of all kinds important to running their households. The popularity of local newspapers rubs off on their advertisers.

A 2012 survey conducted by the Newspaper Works and Brand Navigator found that consumers are three times more likely to positively view businesses which advertise in the local newspaper compared to advertisers in letterbox flyers (58% versus 18%). There is also a big difference between the retention rates of local papers and marriage mail packets. The average home re-

ceives 848 pieces of junk mail every year, 44% of this is thrown away without being read or opened. Most direct mail is disposed of within 24 hours of receipt. CVC Audit data has found that more than 50% of local papers are retained in the home for three or more days.

You can consult your paper's audit to get your publication's retention rate. Buying advertising in a local paper compared to most marriage mail packages is akin to buying a tailored suit or buying off the rack at Walmart.

The national mailing firms use post office zip code maps to design a distribution area which reaches the number of people they wish to reach. This distribution is created with the needs of the mailer in mind and no thought is given to local shopping patterns or the needs of local businesses.

In the first case, you can order exactly what you want; in the second, you must settle for what you get. With marriage mail, the business owner can have any type of ad they want, as long as it is an insert! In a local paper, they can choose from a wide variety of display ads or inserts. They can size the ad to suit their specific business needs. If

they want to promote one special item, they can run a small ad with just that one item. If they are holding a big "Anniversary Sale", the business owner can buy a double truck or a large insert. This is an important talking point when selling against marriage mail. One of the main reasons that people choose to go into business for themselves is that they want to be the "boss." Entrepreneurs, by definition, do not like to be told what to do. In a local paper, they have far more control over their advertising program.

In many cases, the coverage of a marriage mail package is determined by someone from outside the market. The national mailing firms use post office zip code maps to design a distribution area which reaches the number of people they wish to reach. This distribution is created with the needs of the mailer in mind and no thought is given to local shopping patterns or the needs of local businesses. Frequently, businesses are forced to buy coverage that lies outside their service area to get the areas they want.

Because they are an integral part of the community, local publishers understand the dynamics of their markets and target the people their customers want and need to reach. In my experience, marriage mail reps are often very vague about the areas they reach. Their customers should request copies of postal receipts to confirm where they go and to verify that their distribution is accurate.

To survive and thrive in today's dynamic economy, local businesses must remain flexible. For example, if a storm hits keeping people at

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home during a planned sale, a business may be stuck with a large amount of unsold merchandise. This can be very costly, especially if these products have a short shelf life. Their local paper rep will hustle to get a “Sale Extended” ad in the next edition of the paper. Their marriage mail rep will tell them “Gee, I’m sorry to hear that.” The long lead times – often a month – required by marriage mail providers means that businesses need to plan their promotions far in advance. It is difficult for business owners to predict what their business needs will be in six to eight weeks in an ever-changing market.

With their local paper, they can take advantage of changes in the weather, breaking trends and specials offered by their vendors.

Marriage mail does offer some advantages to the local business owner. These packets allow businesses to get total market coverage at a fraction of the cost of solo direct mail. Smart business owners know that delivery is just one small part of a successful marketing program. To motivate consumers, a promotion must reach more than their mailbox; it must reach their hearts and minds.

Most people consider most of the promotions they find in their mailboxes as “junk mail.” They find it more annoying than useful. An exception to this is a local mailed shopper, which provides them with information on promotions by the local businesses where they shop and money saving offers. If they subscribe to a paper or pick it up from a rack while shopping, they are also likely to enjoy it and be engaged by its content.

Marriage mail reps, like all good sales people,

try to focus the conversation on their product’s strong points. In their case, they try to frame “distribution” and a cost comparison to “solo mail” as their key talking points. As free paper reps, we need to change the conversation to shine a light on our key selling points. Here is a recap of our strengths compared to marriage mail:

**As free paper reps, we need to
change the conversation to shine
a light on our key selling points.
Here is a recap of our strengths
compared to marriage mail:**

Image Engagement Flexibility

- **Image** – Most people associate their local paper with their community. They see their local paper as a vital link to the local businesses where they shop. Most consumers see marriage mail as “junk mail” and find it annoying and of little value. The consumer’s opinion of these two media impact their view of the businesses which advertise in them.

- **Engagement** – Because the content is varied and valuable, local papers have rates of readership. The limited interest consumers have in many of the promotions contained in marriage mail packets means that many consumers

throw away these pieces without reading them or after giving them a cursory scan. The higher readership of community papers results in better response rates.

- **Flexibility** – Community papers provide businesses a full range of ways to promote their businesses. This allows businesses to adjust their marketing to fit their current needs. This saves them money and permits them to advertise more consistently.

Local entrepreneurs are presented with a wide range of ways to market and promote their businesses. As representatives of our local papers, a big part of our job is to help our clients make wise choices. We need to understand not only our own products, but our competitors’ products as well, so that we can give our customers sound advice. I may be just a bit biased, but I believe that while marriage mail offers some advantages, the overall value offered by local community papers makes our products a far greater value for our advertisers. By sharing this information with local businesses, we can convince them to “divorce” marriage mail and remind them that local papers are their “one true love.” 📌

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 and put “Link & Learn” in the 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.



What are YOU going to do to celebrate Free Paper Month? Here are some ideas to get the juices flowing:

To do with your readers...

- Invite readers to express their feelings regarding your free paper. Print the good and the bad in a special feature.

To do with your advertisers...

- Run a contest for the “oldest drawer or trunk liner” in the community. The winner must bring the paper to your office to claim the prize.

- Run a trivia contest about your paper or community and give always prizes to the winners.

- Print a photo layout of community sites that have since changed. Let the readers guess that sites and award prizes to the winners.

- Ask key advertisers if you can include the free paper logo in their ads.

- Set up a shopping center display. Mall organizers are always looking for displays that will attract people while shopping.

- Give a prize to the person who calls with the 13th (or whatever number you choose) classified ad for each week or month of July.

- Ask several of your consistent advertisers to write testimonials about how your paper works for them and print the testimonials with photos.

- Honor the longest consistent advertiser who currently runs in your paper. Put the business owner's photo in the paper and run some of his/her early advertising.

- Offer all advertisers spot color during the celebration.

To do with your staff...

- Print the objectives, goals and mission statement of your business and how you strive to meet and surpass those ideas.

- Feature your employees in a photo and caption page describing what they do, what their first job in the free paper industry was and why they chose a career in the industry.

- Challenge advertising reps to a record-breaking number of ads during the month and reward the efforts with cash prizes.

- Brainstorm with your staff and develop ideas on how to celebrate Free Paper Month.

- Encourage your staff to express their feelings regarding your free paper. Print the good and the bad in a special feature.

- Unveil some significant changes in your format, rates or policies during the month.

To do with your community...

- Ask the mayor to proclaim July as National Free paper Month in your community and feature the proclamation and photo in your publication.

- Set up a shopping center display. Mall organizers are always looking for displays that will attract people while shopping.

- Make arrangements with local radio or television stations to get on their talk shows.

- Remind local civic presidents and program chair people about the celebration as far in advance as possible and offer to help set up a special program for them.

- Establish an annual competition in the name of your free paper for the best news story,

photo or feature in the high school paper. Put a plaque in the school or feature in the high school paper. Put a plaque in the school bearing the name of the winner each year.

- Sponsor an essay contest about how your free paper helps the community or why a free press is important.

To do in your paper...

- Run the Free Paper Month logo and advertisement in your publication. Go to www.paper-chain.org/freepapermonth.html.

- Add the PaperChain and Free Paper Month logos to your masthead or flag.

- Explain the historical basis of the importance of free papers and the origin of the industry.

- Run a feature on the awards your free paper has won in various state and national contests.

- Explain in a feature how a story or an ad makes it to print - the people who write it, sell it, compose it, print it, deliver it, etc.

- Develop “Did You Know” fillers to use during the month. For example, Did you know... newsprint usage for one year would stretch from local point to local point; the combined experience of sales staff; the miles driven by circulation people in one year; rolls of film or newsprint used; etc. (Use the facts available from the current “Did You Know” sheet.)

- Feature a member of the community who is the same age as your publication. Highlight the growth of both.

- Whatever you do...Celebrate Free Paper Month! 📌



The “News Guru” Speaks

Kevin takes a look at favorite apps for journalists.

– Kevin Slimp

In April, I was asked to speak on the topic, “New Tools for Newspapers” at an industry-related conference in Des Moines, Iowa. Taking the easy way out, I quickly went online and asked newspaper professionals to share their favorite apps, programs and devices.

I quickly learned editors, designers, photographers, ad reps and other folks at newspapers have definite favorites to help with their daily tasks. Let’s examine a few.

Phonto (free)

Phonto is a simple application that allows users to add text to pictures on their smart-phones. Kim Shepherd, Dehi, New York, wrote that she used Phonto for weather updates online. She was even nice enough to send a couple of samples.

One was a photo of a postal carrier trying to deliver mail in the snow, with the words “No Mail Today” in bold red letters over the picture. Another reminded users a state of emergency was in effect for their county.

Tout (free)

Several users wrote to tell me about Tout, an application which allows users to record, upload and distribute video using smart phones and tablets.

Michael Smith, Aiken, South Carolina, explained his daily newspaper used Tout to record and upload videos from the field, while an editor examined and approved the material using a desktop version of Tout.

Slack (free)

Nathan Simpson, Shelbyville, Kentucky, was the first to write to me about Slack, an app that allows teams to check off to-do lists while working together on a project.



I did a little research and found examples of sales staffs, designer groups and marketing teams using Slack to keep track of their progress while all working on the same project.

Fast Scanner (free)

Kristi Nelson Bumpus, a metro reporter in Tennessee, was the first to comment about scanning software. She noted that her current favorite was Fast Scanner, a free app by Hang Nguyen.

Fast Scanner allows the user to take a pic on their phone, then quickly convert the image to a high-res PDF which can be sent directly from the app via email or messaging.

Percent Calculator – Percentage Calculator (free)

Several ad reps wrote in about calculator apps. No one wants to pull out a pen and paper in front of a client to calculate percentages. Two apps, Percent Calculator and Percentage Calculator, were the most mentioned.

Adobe Sign (free for Adobe CC subscribers)

Adobe Sign is another scanning application with an important twist. Using their fingers,

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Adobe Sign allows users to sign documents on their phone screens. Documents can be scanned, converted to PDF and signed, all in one sequence.

In addition, Adobe signature is legally binding, compliant with e-signature laws around the world.



Instapaper (free)

Instapaper is a favorite of reporters and researchers who need to search and save information on the Internet. A simple click allows users to save web pages and stories to a phone, tablet or computer. Creating archives of web pages related to a topic is a breeze with Instapaper.

Snapseed (free)

Snapseed may be the best photo editing application for the phone. Many of the tools available in Photoshop, Lightroom and other editing applications are available from within Snapseed.

Shadows and highlights, dodge and burn, spot repair, tuning and more are available all while working from a phone or tablet.

Camera+ (\$2.99 - \$4.99)

Simply stated, Camera+ is the best app for taking pictures on an iPhone or iPad. For photographers who want total control over their photos and wish to attain the highest quality reproduction, Camera+ is a must-have app.

I use Camera+ almost daily to shoot RAW images on my iPhone 7, which uses dual lenses to produce RAW images. Compared to the camera app that comes built-in with the iPhone, Camera+ produces results which are far superior.

I received dozens of suggestions, which made preparing for my session in Des Moines a snap. If you have a favorite app, I'd love to know about it for future columns. Send me a note at kevin@kevinslimp.com. 📧

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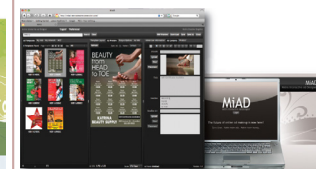
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Postal Pieces

Ask PRC to “Keep the Cap”

— Donna Hanbery

The Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) is conducting a ten year review of the rate setting process established by the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA). On March 20, 2017, comments from all interested parties were due. The Saturation Mailers Coalition, the Small Business Legislative Council, and AFCP, IFPA, MFCP, SAPA, MACPA, CPNE, and the state associations for Florida, New York, and Wisconsin, came together to ask the PRC to “keep the cap”.

The current rate setting process has limited the Postal Service to annual increases in rates, applied on a class basis, that do not exceed the CPI rate cap. The Postal Service has made it clear that it will be seeking relief from the cap in the rate review process. It is expected that postal labor will also urge the PRC to give the Postal Service authority to raise its rates and prices higher than the rate of inflation. It is anticipated that most mailers, mail associations, mail service providers and businesses that depend on the

Postal Service will seek to keep the cap.

The combined comments of SMC, free papers and SBLC argue that the cap is working. Before the cap, the Postal Service could simply announce its revenue requirement and the PRC and stakeholders all were required to “duke it out” in a zero sum game fighting over the rates each type of mail would pay. The comments point

The unreasonable cost burdens of PAEA, including the pie-in-the-sky pre-funding healthcare requirement, are structural problems with the law that can not and should not be fixed by giving the Postal Service more latitude to raise prices.

out that the type of shared mail programs done by our members are very competitive and price elastic. When a price increase of “X” is passed on to customers, it often leads to a “2X” loss of business. The current rate setting system is achieving the objectives of the law. Our comments stated, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”

The comments stress that the Postal Service is performing well in terms of its controllable and operating expenses. The unreasonable cost burdens of PAEA, including the pie-in-the-sky pre-funding healthcare requirement, are structural problems with the law that can not and should not be fixed by giving the Postal Service more latitude to raise prices. The comments show support for postal reform and urge the Commission to not try to fix, with greater pricing flexibility or the right for the Postal Service to raise rates, structural problems with the law that are better addressed by Congress.

The Postal Service has announced it will argue that the current system does not give it pricing flexibility. However, the comments point out that the annual pricing calendar and CPI system have worked well. Mailers and advertisers that depend on the mail have come to expect modest annual adjustments. During the calendar year the Postal Service and businesses can discuss, explore, and plan for promotions, operations, or classification changes. This gives the Postal Service flexibility in proposing rule or rule changes, and making rate adjustments, on a faster track than prior law. It is a cycle that works for the Postal Service, its customers, and the many stakeholders that are part of the mailing industry.

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SMC and the free papers pointed out that they are unique users of the mail. The rate cap system has helped them win and keep customers in the mail. The comments note that shared mailers and free papers that mail inevitably have postage as the highest fixed cost. These mailers spend anywhere from 20% to 50% of every dollar of gross income on postage. But selling the mail and print is not always easy. The comments state "Our members are constantly fighting the perception that 'print is dead' and the 'whiz-bang allure of digital.'" Mailers and free paper publishers are often working against a marketplace bias that mail and print is "old school" or is "too expensive".

In creating and developing the comments, input from SMC members and the members of various free paper associations was taken into account. Comments from contributors stressed the price resistance of big and small advertisers to rate hikes. Large advertisers will simply announce that they have a fixed budget and will not pay more. In the face of a rate increase, large advertisers will adjust their mail mix. The comments warn that any perception of a larger than "average" or market-based price increase can be a catalyst to drive larger advertisers to adjust

their media buy to the disadvantage of print and mail.

A compelling comment about small business came from a free paper publisher. The comments note, "For small businesses, advertising expense is generally seen as a discretionary item. When there is a price increase, small business owners

When choosing between paying more for advertising or lifestyle, lifestyle wins. When price increases are passed on to the small business, the advertising response is predictable... small business advertisers don't pay more; they simply skip an ad, downsize on the size or frequency of advertising, or use this as an excuse to try other media.

see the increase as coming out of their pocket or lifestyle. When choosing between paying more for advertising or lifestyle, lifestyle wins. When price increases are passed on to the small business, the advertising response is predictable." The comments warn that small business advertisers don't pay more; they simply skip an ad, downsize on the size or frequency of advertising,

or use this as an excuse to try other media.

The comments conclude that the rate cap mechanism is working exceedingly well to help mailers and mail stakeholders plan their business, stay in business, and remain mail customers. The rate cap mechanism has spurred the Postal Service to make needed changes in its network and work force. It has contributed to efforts to focus on new products, promotions, and efforts to retain customers and volumes that were not seen under the prior "we can charge what we want" rate setting process.

The comments conclude by asking the PRC to find that the current rate-making system is fulfilling the objectives of the law, and that no further rule making or proceedings are needed.

The Commission began considering the comments of all parties after the March 20, 2017 deadline. If the Commission finds that changes in the rate setting process are desirable or warranted, it is expected that a separate formal rule-making proceeding will be announced and that the Postal Service and other stakeholders will have a chance to comment, make suggestions, or oppose suggestions at that time.

Additional updates on the comments filed by others and the status of the proceedings will be covered in future articles. 📍





Sales Training

Transactional vs. Relational Sales

– John Foust

I was talking to Nick, a long-time ad manager, about the nature of selling. “I agree with the theory that there are two types, transactional and relational,” he said.

“As consumers, we have become increasingly transactional. We go to the store, pick out a product, take it to the register, pay for it and take it home – even if the clerk at the register doesn’t bother to say ‘hello.’ Or we shop online, find something of interest, compare prices, click ‘buy’ and wait for delivery.”

Nick explained that organizations that rely on sales – including newspapers – measure success in terms of transactions. How many ads are in the latest edition? How much revenue will those ads produce?

“It’s tempting to see all sales as transactional,” Nick said, “but that would be a huge mistake. The challenge is to be relational in a transactional world. That’s why customer loyalty, which is long term, is more valuable than customer satisfaction, which is sometimes based on single buying experiences.

“It starts with rapport,” Nick said. “I encourage our sales team to find common ground

and build from there. Along the way, clients learn that our folks have some marketing savvy. That gives us credibility and makes selling a lot easier.”

To expand on Nick’s observations:

1. Individual transactions don’t necessarily lead to good relationships. When sales people treat their advertising product as a commodity, they encourage prospects and customers to see them as anonymous people at the cash register. There’s no connection. That often leads to churn – advertisers who jump ship if their ads don’t work right away.
2. Good relationships can lead to more transactions. A smart sales person looks beyond the immediate gratification of today’s sale. He or she works to build rapport and turn that transactional advertiser into a marketing partner.
3. Leadership is relational. In many organizations, a sales person who consistently has good numbers is likely to be promoted to sales management. If his or her company has a transactional sales culture, the new manager will be poorly prepared for a management position. The duties of leading a team are relational, not transactional.
4. Individual ad sales are transactional. Think of a vending machine. Insert money into

the coin slot and get an ad. It’s difficult to go any further than that, when sales people present themselves – and are seen as – order takers who sell one ad at a time.

5. Ad campaigns are relational. Properly executed, an ad campaign requires consistent contact between sales person and client. From planning to execution to periodic tweaks, there are plenty of opportunities to build strong relationships.

6. Don’t forget your clients’ relationships with consumers. On a broader scale, strong ad campaigns create relationships between advertisers and their audiences. Think of the number of times you have been drawn to certain stores or brand names because you felt connected to them. That emotional attachment is a major factor in brand identity.

And that kind of campaign success can lead to – surprise! – more advertising dollars for your newspaper. 📌

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