



Community Papers of Michigan

INFORMER

June 2017

mifreeads.com



OUR DATA SPEAKS VOLUMES

Celebrate JULY, 2017

FREE COMMUNITY PAPER MONTH

Industry insiders know and recognize the valuable service our community papers provide to readers and advertisers, but all too often we become so wrapped up in publishing that those important facts get overlooked and we fail to market them adequately. It is increasingly important to remind those we serve of the unique value we provide to the community.

PaperChain has historically provided marketing materials to celebrate Free Community Paper Month, This year we have updated all of the Free Paper Month materials and uploaded them to the PaperChain website. The materials on the website include two distinct sets of ads in a variety of sizes, a poster to display in your publications' windows or around your towns, several Bill stuffers to be used in June and July and ad layouts for use on your website.

In the spirit of independence and freedom celebrated nationwide every July we need every member publication to help to spread the word and demonstrate the reach of our industry nationwide. We encourage you do this by joining with other free papers across the country for a celebration of the Free Community Paper industry during the entire month of July.

The Free Community Paper Month Logo is shown at the beginning of this article. Publishers are asked not to alter the Free Paper Month logo, but please use it often on your mast head, folios, within promotional

ads, articles, on your websites and as filler throughout your paper leading up to and during the month of July. For all of the prepared original artwork and PDF's of the artwork visit: <http://paperchain.org/freepapermonth.html>

We encourage you to localize the ads and draw your reader's attention to the important role your paper and staff play in this industry and how this industry stimulates the local and national economy.

We are all so very busy these days but we also encourage you to brainstorm with your staff and find ways to use the month of July to highlight your publication's accomplishments and the many ways your publications help drive and support the local economy. We have a list of ways to celebrate included on the PaperChain Website to help kick-start your discussion It is entitled "What are you doing to Celebrate Free Paper Month?"

The 2017 celebration is only as big as you choose to make it. Ask your town or city, county and state government leaders to consider taking action on a local proclamation formally recognizing Free Community Paper Month and your publication specifically. Suggested proclamation verbiage can also be found on the website. Your paper has made a great investment in your community and this industry. Only you and your staff can help us bring that story alive to your readers in this collaborative industry-wide effort. Please consider active participation in the July 2017 Free Community Paper Month celebration. Visit us on Facebook and let us know your plans for Free Community Paper Month. Thank you in advance for all you do to enhance the industry with every issue you publish and with your support of this project.

On Behalf of PaperChain - Thank you for participating in Free Community Paper Month. Together we are strong!...Together we can truly make a difference!

Download BONUS AD
<http://bit.ly/2rdGmlN>



Sponsored by PaperChain & this Free Community Paper.

Hybrid Marketing launched to create maximum impact for local businesses

by Amy Jo Kinyon, *Managing Editor*

Webster defines hybrid as something that has two different types of components performing essentially the same function. For J-Ad Graphics, that function has always been about building relationships with local businesses. Those relationships, forged over the decades, create a desire to see businesses thrive. That desire has launched Hybrid Marketing, a new division of J-Ad Graphics.

“Success is a great story, but life-long relationships are better,” said Jason McCune, Hybrid Marketing director. McCune joined the J-Ad team at the beginning of the year and has been working to create a solutions-based program for business owners.

“There’s a lot of agencies and companies doing marketing, but very few delivering marketing solutions, and we do that with Hybrid,” said McCune. “It’s not a product, not a one size fits all, it’s a truly customized solution created with research and an in-depth knowledge base of marketing.”

One example McCune gave of the Hybrid approach is one of the most common, yet underused, tools available to a small business: a website.

“We create responsive websites that are designed to be an employee of the company,” said McCune. “They are designed to earn revenue and create opportunities for businesses. And the only way that works is by doing the research and learning the business before developing a website.”

Beyond websites, Hybrid Marketing is able to offer just about any product in the print and digital worlds. Posters, business cards, landing pages and social media strategies all can be part of a hybrid package and all are customized to foster success for an individual business.

With a history in marketing, McCune



Hybrid Marketing Team - Working to create custom marketing solutions for local businesses, part of the Hybrid team gathers to discuss strategy, including (from left) Chris Silverman, Mike Gilmore, Jennie Yonker, Jason McCune, Jeannette Healy, Steven Speckman, Steve Skedgell, Scott Ommen, Ty Greenfield and Amy Jo Kinyon.

was drawn to J-Ad after meeting publisher Fred Jacobs and witnessing the unmatched commitment toward local growth and success.

“I sat with Fred Jacobs and heard the story of J-Ad, the roots of how the family built the business,” McCune said. “Here is a man who has dedicated his life to the community and only wants to improve on it, and that’s the opportunity we have with Hybrid Marketing.”

McCune said all of the pieces, skill and talent for the new division are already in place in the staff of J-Ad Graphics.

Also joining the team is Steven Speckman, who brings a natural creativity and organization skill set to the team. Speckman said he realized J-Ad is a place that is more than a job, it is a place that creates and strengthens relationships.

“I could see how the company is about the people, the clients and those relationships,” said Speckman.

One of those relationships ultimately created the opportunity for Speckman to bring his talents to J-Ad Graphics.

“He came as a recommendation from a customer that we completed a project for,” said McCune. “He embodies the qualities we were looking for and the qualities needed to ensure Hybrid creates the best opportunities for local businesses. He is driven, passionate about people, and his goal is to see others succeed.”

Follow-through and delivering what the customer needs, rather than what the salesperson wants to sell are, important points for McCune and the entire Hybrid team.

“I want people to realize, we get things done,” said McCune. “The customer and what they need actually matter to us. You can never predetermine what people need, you can only find that out by learning their business and doing the research.”



Mark your calendars and plan on attending

CPM's General Membership Meeting

August 1, 2017, 11:30 AM – 2:30 PM

Educating/Engaging Your Customers

Your ads work - it's the content that needs help!

Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center - East Lansing

There is no charge to attend and CPM will provide Lunch.

- See what CPM is working on for you.
- John R. Gaedert Outstanding Community Paper Professional Award Presentation.
- Share your input during our roundtable discussion.
- Take home a revenue idea or two.
- Be Home by 5:00 PM!

Please RSVP to the CPM Office by June 30, 2017 with the number of people from your company who will attend.





By Peter Wagner
Founder and Publisher,
The N'West Iowa REVIEW

Finding Dollars Beyond the Obituaries

Newspapers can generate additional exceptional advertising revenue with a special section state and funeral planning guide. When we first started considering such a section we wrongly gave it the working title "Death and Dying".

While that title clearly defined the purpose and direction of the project, we quickly realized the name lacked the sense of care and concern needed to sell the necessary advertising support to local funeral homes, grief counseling facilities, funeral planners, bank trust departments, florists, headstone suppliers and a multitude of others working in that industry. After considerable thought we came up with the title "Looking beyond tomorrow" and that has seemed to be satisfactory to everyone involved.

At The N'West Iowa REVIEW we traditionally publish the "Looking beyond tomorrow" update every twenty-four to thirty-six months. We've found it works best published as a half tab or book size product. We distribute it with our Saturday paid circulation newspaper and later deliver copies to



Most of the editorial material is collected through interviews with representatives of the businesses and professional services that regularly advertise in The N'West Iowa REVIEW. We make sure to involve a different interview source each time we publish to keep all our advertisers happy.

Some of the articles in our most recent edition included: possible options to transfer financial assets, the ways parents can help children cope, what factors to weigh when choosing life insurance, how the funeral service can ease a loss and the patient and family comfort provided by a hospice.

Many of the articles are accompanied by sidebars filled with lists of easy-to-use information. It is important to remember the book will be distributed to families in need for many months after it is published.

The advertising opportunities should be obvious. Along with the local funeral homes, the community hospitals, retirement and nursing homes are obvious.

But the list can be much longer than that: hospices, home medical supply firms, investment counselors, trust departments of local banks, pharmacies and even some forward thinking churches are good prospects.

So are counseling services, florists, cemetery associations, catering firms and limo services.

At The N'West Iowa REVIEW we sell

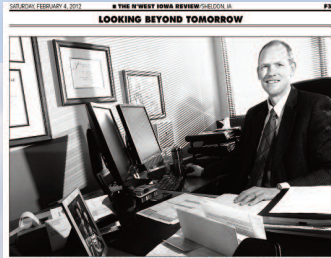
only process color modular advertising in our "Living beyond tomorrow" book. Once we determine the price for a page ad we compute 60% of that amount for a half page ad and 35% for a quarter page.

Be sure to always remind your advertisers that the book is an investment in more than just one week's readership. Many local experts will be handing it out to individuals in need for many months to come. (Continued on page 5)

Grid of various advertisements including: Obituaries for Jim Gauthier, OREGON FARMER'S MARKET, and several other notices and ads.

A typical issue of "Looking Beyond Tomorrow" will include comments from a priest or pastor addressing end-of-life questions, a simple guide to estate planning, information on coping with grief, suggestions on life insurance distribution, a guide to advanced funeral planning, details on wills and the role of an executor, information on the use of a retirement home, nursing facility or hospice, organ donation and the importance of the role of the local church and minister.

LOOKING BEYOND TOMORROW



Mich Schrems, an attorney at Wolff, Wheeler, De Hough & Schrems, completes some work in the office on a recent afternoon in Sheldon. He often works with estate planning and end-of-life issues and notes that while there are many ways to transfer assets, all with their own pros and cons, wills have remained the most common form.

Consider options to transfer assets

Possessions may be distributed five ways

BY ANNE SCHREMS
SHELDON

Mich Schrems, an attorney at Wolff, Wheeler, De Hough & Schrems, in Sheldon, said that while there are many ways to transfer assets, all with their own pros and cons, wills have remained the most common form.

Schrems said that a possibly simpler option could simply be "to nothing." He said that the best method of transferring assets varies by circumstance and certain methods may be better in a given situation.

The power of attorney is a method of transferring assets to another person, and Schrems said that it is a good option for people who are unable to manage their own affairs.

The general power of attorney grants another individual permission to make decisions on the owner's behalf. It is a document that is usually signed in the presence of a notary public.

Schrems said that it is not always the best option for people who are unable to manage their own affairs. He said that it is best to consult with an attorney to determine the best option for each individual case.

Schrems said that it is important to consider all options when making decisions about asset transfer. He said that it is best to consult with an attorney to determine the best option for each individual case.

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General Practice Including Services In Estate Planning | Trusts | Wills | Long Term Care | Business and Farm Succession Planning

Let Your Call be our starting point. We can help you determine the best course of action for your situation.

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Heart Screen includes: CT calcium score, EKG, cholesterol, blood pressure, Body Mass Index and risk estimate for heart conditions.

Sanford Southon Clinic
900 Elm Street, Sheldon

Parents can help children in coping

Most important thing is simply being available

Parents should allow for open conversation and be open to listening to their children's concerns.

How children grieve

What parents can do

OSCEOLA COMMUNITY HOSPICE
Phone 712.754.4611 • 555 Hwy. IA 51249
www.osceolacommunityhospital.org

No one can predict the future or know when death may come. What we can do is look beyond tomorrow by preplanning and preparing for our loved ones and taking care of the details now. The information in this booklet has been compiled to assist you in those preparations as well as understanding the grieving process for loved ones we have lost.

Generate additional advertising revenue with a special section state and funeral planning guide.

Peter W. Wagner is publisher of the award winning N'West Iowa REVIEW and 12 additional publications. He is often called "The Idea Man" and is a regular presenter at State Press Association and Publishing Group conventions and seminars. You can contact him regarding his programs "100 Ideas for Fun and Profit" or "Selling Print Advertising the Wagner Way" by emailing pww@iowainformation.com or calling his cell 712-348-3550 anytime.

In June of '93, I wrote my first design article for *The Independent Publisher (TIP)*. Back then, the column was "Graphic Details," which is pretty much what I have been about from the beginning...



Design has not changed, but the way we create that design in our advertising is a whole 'nother story!

The concept of design is simple—good design is good design... period. But the tools of the trade have been subjected to a radical redesign. The idea of desktop publishing had been embraced by the industry and impacted the very process of how we created advertising. The designer was no longer a part of the process, but actually controlled the process... from page layout, graphics, photos, art, to the final output.

The changes in technology offered an opportunity for small, independent papers to compete with the "big boys." Computers and software offer affordable options in the areas of composition and pre-press. Learning the Macintosh computer is less complex and takes far less time to learn than understanding how to use the conventional composition equipment—trust me, I was the Queen of "secondary file merge" on the MCS system (really ancient technology) before I even began to figure out how to define page parameters!

Looking Beyond

When I started in graphic design at *The Booster*, a free paper, I walked into a world that was changing. There was a design station, a typesetting station, a paste-up station and finally, pagination—by hand. A mere six or seven years later, all the "stations" were beginning to merge—like some giant Borg Collective. The technology that rocketed us into a maze of hardware, software, peripherals and what-not became more complex, yet many more people could become involved, so is it any wonder that the design process somehow got lost in all that transition?

Now it seems we have a lot more responsibility—to become a writer, a designer, a typesetter, a color separator, a trouble-shooter. Where once upon a time there were skilled individuals to handle each of these aspects, the rush of technology has blurred the lines between these fields. That's the bad news.

The good news is that it has also opened up a whole different, and powerful, set of tools for me to use—and the responsibility to make myself a more informed individual in a number of graphic areas—pretty heady stuff! It takes time, but with each application, I have, in fact, come a long way.

About Design

Good design comes from the understanding of the building blocks of graphic design and using them appropriately. Designing an ad is simply organizing the information and the graphic material into the most readable and coherent manner possible. The computer is only a tool—a very useful tool—in this process. It is all too easy to become so involved in the hardware and software available that we forget the message of the ad as we stretch, condense, duplicate, rotate, drop-shadow and do all sorts of "tricks" with the tools at hand.

It is with this in mind, designing with the Mac/PC, and this column, that will allow us to explore the process—sharing tips, tricks and other notes to improve our ads, as well as our technique in the development of effective advertising. Drop me a line at the address below.

Happy 4th of July

It doesn't seem possible that the year is almost half over! Next month we go patriotic and advertisers want flags and fireworks and all things associated with the festive 4th. As you can see in the next column and below, use of the flag has some pretty strict rules. Go ahead, just Google "flag in advertising" and see what you get.

But since I am a big fan of vector art (it allows for best and multiple uses of the artwork), I have included various patriotic art that I downloaded from graphicstock.com. The large graphic flag I already had as well as the firework burst, but the rest are new and I haven't taken any of them apart—well, maybe a few of them!



THE US FLAG IN ADVERTISING

Especially since 9/11, the American flag has been plastered on everything from beer mugs to underwear, and seeing people wearing it or in car commercials has become a daily occurrence. But what many may not know is that the use of the flag in such contexts is expressly forbidden in official US Flag Code.

Yep, wearing the flag as a lapel pin might be fine, but bumper stickers, t-shirts, etc. is definitely not acceptable!

According to the subset of US Code which deals with proper care and use of the American flag, "The flag should never be used for advertising purposes in any manner whatsoever. It should not be embroidered on such articles as cushions or handkerchiefs and the like, printed or otherwise impressed on paper napkins or boxes or anything that is designed for temporary use and discard."

The code, which was drawn up at the first National Flag Conference in Washington in 1923 and adopted in 1942, states, "No part of the flag should ever be used as a costume or athletic uniform."

The code however, is not enforced, nor is it enforceable. It is merely a set of guidelines, letting Americans know what to do—and what not to do—with our red, white and blue national emblem.

I normally do not use a direct representation of the flag because there are so many other ways to signify the flag.

— and that's your 4th of July trivia this holiday!



Happy Designing!
Until next month!

I write for *IFPA TIP*, *SAPAToday* and the *CPM INFORMER*. If you want more info, PDFs of articles, or have ideas, e-mail: hanrahan.in@att.net
Ellen Hanrahan ©2017



Michael Angelo Caruso

“Know Your Audience” is Only Half the Tip

Most of you are probably familiar with the classic public speaking adage to “Know your audience.”

This is great advice for salespeople, too.

The idea, of course, is that when a speaker or salesperson is familiar with the person(s) on the other side of the table, the person speaking can address that person’s needs.

That second part is important. It’s not knowledge about your audience that makes you a better salesperson, it’s what you do with that knowledge.

Put another way, it’s not what you know about your audience, it’s how you use that info to

customize your presentation so that what you say resonates.

This means that you should not give the same presentation to every audience.

This means that a politician running for office should not give the same speech in every campaign stop.

Customize for every audience

Some business leaders believe that every employee should be treated the

same.

While it’s true that there are basic considerations that should be afforded to all, each employee is different from the other.

Audiences consist of people, which means that every group is different, as well.

Older people are different from younger people. Men are different than women. Brits are different than Americans and so on.

I like engineers. They have a very linear way of thinking. I don’t have that skill, but I admire it.

Linear thinkers are known as “left-brain” people because they tend to be what Dr. Roger Sperry termed, “left-brain dominant” when it comes to problem solving and making decisions.

So when I know my audience on any given day is mostly “left-brained,” I customize my presentation or keynote to accommodate the sensibilities of the attendees.

Here’s a video with an easy example of how knowing if your audience is “left brained” or “right brained” can help you connect with people in less much time.

<http://michaelangelocaruso.com/good-communication-never-goes-out-of-style/>

A faster connection

The concept of message customization can do a lot to help you

connect with people faster and in more meaningful ways.

If you’re a salesperson, you can use this technique to help more people, reduce your sales cycle and even edge out the competition.

Here are some easy ways to know your audience before speaking to them:

- Familiarize yourself with the event registration list
- Research the group online
- Interview a few attendees by phone before the event
- Arrive early to mingle with the audience
- Poll the audience before you officially start your presentation

For more speaking tips, read *Good Communication Never Goes Out of Style*.

About The Author

Michael Angelo Caruso is one of America’s premier keynote speakers. He is known as “the speakers’ speaker.” Mr. Caruso teaches presentation skills and is in demand for conventions, conferences, and annual events of all kinds. Michael specializes in working with leaders, salespeople, and the customer service industry. He has spoken in South America, Africa, Australia, Asia, the Middle East, and 49 of the 50 states. He spends lots of time working and playing in California, Texas, Florida, and New York.



By Bob Berting
Berting Communications

Smarter Ad Design By Savvy Papers

I once conducted a 2 day sales training program for a chain of papers who were struggling to get more business. They had readers tell them that their ads were hard to read. As a matter of fact, their whole paper was hard to read. After looking over several issues of their paper, I saw the problem—their paper was crammed with reverse type ads—white copy on a dark black background—a sea of black ink everywhere. To make things worse, the ads were crammed full of type from border to border making them difficult to read.

I suggested that they change their ads to eliminate much of the reverse type. I also explained that ads need to be designed so there are units of thought—that each unit of graphic art and copy blocks need white space around them, making them far easier to read. Once these changes were implemented, the paper had a new look that drastically improved their readership. What had happened was the advertising sales staff had slowly caused the ugly look on a gradual basis. They felt by creating reverse type ads this would make their ads stand out. When their customers saw all the reverse type advertising, they even thought that was the thing to do.

Ugly ads in many cases are a production process

The more ads brought in and run rapidly through the production department, the better. I call this the “sausage grinder mentality”. Unfortunately well-designed ads fall by the wayside.

Many times, quality advertisers resent the look of a paper and its poorly designed ads. In a study by the Readership Institute, it gave the opinion that people will spend more time with a paper if they find the ads interesting and enjoyable to read. Also, editorial content was better read when the paper had quality advertising content.

On the other extreme, there are publications who spend excessive amounts of time designing ads with the hope they’ll somehow win awards in press association ad contest divisions. These

beautiful ads are just that—beautiful ads. They aren’t designed to really pull business for the advertiser.

The impact on future advertisers

The publication with ugly ads needs to recognize the impact on future advertisers. The new chic restaurant wants an upscale image and may go elsewhere for their advertising campaign. This movement can create a domino effect and can be devastating if large chunks of advertisers start rejecting the idea of advertising in the ugly ad newspaper. Worse, competing media will notice it too and take advantage of the situation.

So if you’re worried about declining readership, start looking at your ads, they may be ugly.



Bob Berting is a professional speaker, advertising sales trainer and publisher marketing consultant who has conducted over 1500 live seminars, tele-seminars and webinars for newspaper sales staffs, their customers, and print media associations in the U.S. and Canada. His newest offer for the newspaper industry is a package of his two e-books “Dynamic Advertising Sales and Image Power” and “Advanced Selling Skills For The Advertising Sales Pro”. Both books can be ordered on his website www.bobberting.com individually for 19.95 or both for 35.00. Contact Bob at bob@bobberting.com or 800-536- 5408. He is located at 6330 Woburn Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46250.



By Ryan Dohrn

President/Founder,
Brain Swell Media LLC

The Oxford English Dictionary defines "relevance" as "the state of being closely connected or appropriate to the matter in hand". This definition extends and expands to the world of media sales and ad sales training.

Relevance in ad sales is NOT about learning a prospect's favorite vacation spot from Facebook. That is often seen as "creepy". Relevance is recognizing that you need to create a customized ad sales experience for each client.

Ad sales relevance is proving that we, as ad sales professionals, have done our homework and that the ideas we are presenting will benefit our clients in robust ways. Let's explore four ideas to prove relevance to our clients as we strive to book more meetings and close more business.

- Stop sending generic ad sales prospecting emails. Recently a major player in the social media space sent me a 700-word email as the initial point of contact from their ad sales team. Why did I open it? The subject line was "Free Food?" Ok, you got me on that one. Then, the body of the email went on explain the features, advantages, and benefits of their product. The email was all about them; it was super boring

Get Relevant or Get Lost! 4 Ways To Increase Your Relevance In Order To Drive Ad Sales

and really contained nothing to benefit me. Emails without relevance to me are dead to me. I deleted it and I expect to be assaulted via email for the next two weeks, because some ad sales automation system has been triggered to attack in response to my opening of the email. Crap.

- Send super relevant prospecting emails. The best prospecting emails are short and contain three elements to draw in the prospect. I teach this in all of my ad sales training classes and the feedback is off the charts positive.

- The subject line needs to present a solution to a specific potential problem or something specific to the company. For example, "new idea to cut your shipping costs".

- The body of the email needs to be VERY relevant and should prove that you did some research before you sent it. For example: "Hi Bob. Before sending you this email I did some research on Bob's Shoes. I noticed on your web site that you offer free shipping to all customers. I have a unique way to save you hundreds if not thousands of dollars on those costs. Could you set aside 20 minutes on Thursday to discuss this with me? I promise to not waste your time."

- I like to include a link a short promo video that explains what you have to offer. "Bob, here is a very short video that explains what we have to offer."

- Do your homework. Prospects appreciate ad sales professionals that prepare for a meeting. The longer you have been selling the more likely it is that you will make an ad sales call and "wing it". Wrap your head around the technology at your fingertips and get your intel on the company in order before you fire off that first email. The more relevant you can be to the prospect, the better. Now, keep in mind, be careful making huge assumptions about a company. *(Continued on page 10)*



Get Relevant or Get Lost! 4 Ways To Increase Your Relevance In Order To Drive Ad Sales *(Continued from page 9)*

• Be authentic. Inc.com Contributing Editor Geoffrey James said that to be authentic is to “effortlessly practice the fine art of listening, and to have the courage to speak the truth”. I agree. I also feel that the opposite of authenticity is arrogance. There is a unique difference between the two. In my ad sales training workshops I teach To be authentic you need to be aware of your product and how it will impact the client. This is based on research and listening. Arrogant ad salespeople prepare to debate with clients. You are not preparing for war. You are preparing to guide a client toward some type of success. I truly feel that the less you sell the more you will sell. Buyers in 2017 hate to be sold, they hate it. Authenticity is hard to fake. Be open to criticism and

make appropriate changes as needed to your prospecting process and your ad sales pitch. If you do not have a ad sales coach, hire one! My coach sees things that I would never see. Don't wait for your company to hire you a ad sales coach – do it yourself. High achievers seek guidance. I can get you access to some top-quality ad sales coaches, just reach out. Ryan@BrainSwellMedia.com Authenticity in your ad sales emails might look like this... “I know that a lot of ad sales people have probably wasted your time in the past. I am not one of those people”. Or, “my goal is not to sell you something. My goal is to present you with some solid ideas worth considering”. Or, “I promise to not give you some huge ad sales pitch”. Or, “I have several clients like you and they

are seeing great results”. Or, “I have enjoyed the privilege of walking many clients like you through this process”. Ask a colleague to check your emails for authenticity.

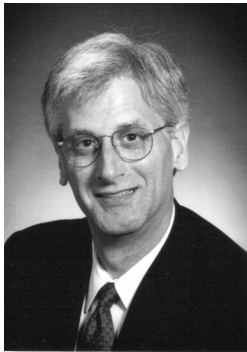
Again, relevance in ad sales is NOT about learning a prospect's favorite vacation spot from Facebook. That is often seen as “creepy”. Relevance is recognizing that you need to create a customized ad sales experience for each client. Sure, it takes a TON of work, but generic ad sales prospecting typically yields generic results. Step up your game. Get to know LinkedIn inside and out, spend time setting up Google Alerts for your prospects, use tools like Winmo or sign up for online ad sales training.

Ryan Dohrn is an award winning media sales coach and offers media sales training to thousands of media sales executives each year. He is also an international motivational speaker and the author of the best selling media sales book, *Selling Backwards*. Ryan is the President and founder of Brain Swell Media, a boutique media sales training and media sales coaching firm with a detailed focus on media sales training and coaching for media and technology companies. He is also the owner and Publisher of SalesTrainingWorld.com an online portal for media sales training success. Contact information: Ryan R. Dohrn, President/Founder, Brain Swell Media LLC, Ryan@BrainSwellMedia.com, <http://www.BrainSwellMedia.com>, <http://RyanDohrn.com>, <http://360adsales.com>, <http://sellingbackwards.com>, <http://SsalesTrainingWorld.com>
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By John Foust
Raleigh, NC



Qualify Your Advertising Prospects

You may have heard the old story about the door-to-door salesman who was selling vacuum cleaners way out in the country. When a lady came to the door, he dramatically emptied a bag of dirt onto the floor and boasted, "Ma'am, if this vacuum cleaner doesn't get rid of every speck of this dirt, I'll eat it." She said, "Come on in. We don't have electricity."

Although there's almost no chance that this actually happened, it illustrates the importance of qualifying prospects. Ross, who manages the sales team at his paper, told me they place a lot of emphasis on qualifying the businesses they approach about advertising. "There's no use to try to sell something to someone who is not in a position to buy," he said. "So we do everything we can to look at our marketing products from the other person's perspective."

Ross sticks to the philosophy that there are two times to qualify a prospect: (1) Before the conversation and (2) During the conversation. That's much better than getting bad news after making a presentation. Here's a closer look:

1. Before the conversation. "When it comes to financial qualifying, a lot of information is available," he said. "If the company has advertised with us before, we can easily search the files for previous budgets and invoices. And if we've done proposals for them in the past, we can get plenty of insights there."

"We've made efforts to learn the ad rates of our competitors. Of course, it's difficult to learn about special deals and discounts, but at least we have a general idea of their starting points. If our target prospect is advertising in other media outlets, we can put together a pretty good profile of their expenses."

Beyond the budget, Ross encourages his team to learn enough about their prospects to figure out what kind of marketing they need. Is this a business that traditionally advertises in print? Do their competitors have a strong online presence? Can their customers be categorized as general interest or business-to-business? Is their marketing based on brand identity or special offers? Do their competitors advertise in Ross' paper? If so, does the

sales person have access to ad response rates?

2. During the conversation. "Through the years, I've heard stories about sales people who leave appointments feeling optimistic, but find out later that there was no way the person could buy an ad program," Ross explained. "At my paper, we don't want that to happen to our sales team."

"No matter how much we learn in advance, there's a lot more to discover," he continued. "So when we have face-to-face meetings, we confirm what we've learned ahead of time and ask questions to fill in the blanks. We simply tell them that the more we know, the more we can help."

Ross makes a lot of sense, doesn't he? Without the right kind of information to qualify prospects, you might face a big, ugly pile of dirt without electricity.

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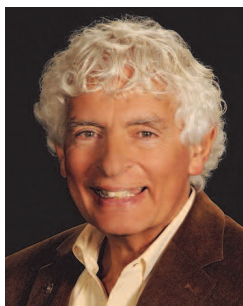
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