

# tip

The Independent Publisher



**IFPA**   
INDEPENDENT FREE PAPERS OF AMERICA  
**October 2015**





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*"...it can be independence forever for those who value it sufficiently... if they give their allegiance to an association such as this one, they will be dedicated to keeping the spirit alive, and they will be doing it by helping each other."*

— Victor R. Jose  
IFPA Founding Conference  
September 20, 1980

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On the cover, Rena Reiser receives the Distinguished Service Award from Vice President Jane Means.





# Distinguished Service Award Goes To Rena Reiser



It is an honor and a privilege today to be able to present the 2015 IFPA Distinguished Service Award for recognition of this individual's commitment to the principles and spirit of IFPA and her dedicated service in furthering the objectives of the association.

The individual being honored this afternoon has been part of the free paper industry since 2001 and already has an impressive history of service to IFPA. She has served six years as an director on your IFPA Board of Directors.

This year's recipient is quick to say "Yes, I'll help!" For instance, when organizing our new network of sales managers, a health issue developed; we needed someone to step up quick and help out. Minutes after sending a short email, this leader said, "Yes, I'll Help!" and she prepared the flyer explaining the program that is in our Welcome packet.

She was the conference chair in Reno; and for those of you who have ever had the task of being conference chair, you know how much is involved. The Reno conference was a big success.

For this Board member, it means monthly conference call Board meetings at 7 a.m.

She spends hours in the community outside of work particularly dedicated to rescuing dogs – 9 in the past 10 years! If you have a chance, ask her about her family's fun with board games; it's a great story.

She is a true leader and a true friend.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a privilege to present the 2015 IFPA Distinguished Service Award to IFPA board director and Vice President / Director of Sales of the New Mexico Marketplace, Rena Reiser.

## San Antonio Snapshots





# Doug's Dribble

by  
Doug  
Fabian



Well, here it is... first column as your IFPA President... part deux. If you remember the first time that I had to write columns for TIP, then you have been in the business for a while. As far as the rest of the people reading this, you will endure these columns for the first time. The good news is that you will only need to read twelve of these columns.

We had a great conference in San Antonio. I have had numerous correspondences about how many great ideas that people took home and are putting into motion. That is the goal of providing quality conferences. While attendance was down, compared to normal conferences, the energy was as strong or stronger than normal. I wish to especially thank Douglas Fry, Danielle Burnett, and Eileen Curley for all of their work in planning and executing the conference. Also, special thanks to Gary Rudy and my wife Connie for running the registration and information desk. To all the attendees, I hope that you will start getting your investment back in

short order. For those who could not attend, we are already planning next year's conference, returning to the awesome Caribe Royale in Orlando, Florida. Don't miss this one!

Can't write this column without mentioning what a true honor it was to be in the presence of so many people sharing ideas so selflessly. I came home with seven solid ideas that I am going to use and four that I have on the back burner. Being an old goat in the industry, I am usually happy to bring one good idea home. I appreciate everyone who stepped up and shared the ideas. It was awesome! In our own papers, if we can approach that zest, we will bring many buyers and sellers together and add to our success.

The following is a partial repeat from a past column, but, it really explains how I feel about our organization and is the platform for the next year's business...

On to the meat of my message. As IFPA board members, we share an important responsibility. I will use

an analogy from one of my favorite songs. Casting Crowns sings a song titled "If We Are The Body" which challenges us as people. If the entire membership is the body of IFPA, then the board must accomplish the following:

-We must be the hands that reach out and help members in need, or that have any questions about anything we do as an organization.

-We must be the hands that heal our members with challenges. Together, we should be there to help our members solve their challenges

-Our words need to teach. We, as a board, have to be strong in our convictions to stick to our goal of providing our members opportunities to learn.

-Our feet have to be going. We need to move forward and not look back. This board will have to do what we can to look to the future and provide the organization with guidance toward that future.

-Most importantly, this body needs to feel loved by this board. I know that each and every member of my board has a strong love for our industry and for the members of IFPA. I feel that we need to be there for each and every one of you that is (still) reading this column. I encourage you to contact any of us at any time. Call the other guys at three in the morning, but call on me as often as you wish. Our phone numbers and email addresses are in the beginning of each issue of TIP and also on [www.ifpa.com](http://www.ifpa.com)

Thanks for making it through the first column with me. Only 11 more to endure.

Happy Sellin'

Doug



Will the Internet kill your community paper?  
Did instant coffee kill coffee?

New technologies change many things. But not everything. You may tweet, blog, surf, shop, or search online but you continue to read your free community paper. You just proved it.

Readership of community papers is now higher than the big papers, and continues to grow. Rather than being replaced by "instant" media, your local community paper has become an important part of our neighborhood.

The reason, which sometimes is not heard because of all the noise about the Internet, is pretty obvious: your community paper does what the Internet doesn't. We promote connections at a local level. Community papers join readers and advertisers in ways digital media don't.

In fact, the local content and power of your community paper makes advertising even more effective. We are the number one medium for driving purchases. That's important in every product category.

Including coffee.

**Community Papers**  
Working For You



# Graphic Hooks

by  
Ellen  
Hanrahan



**High school class reunions ...** can be fun, but inputting text for the reunion booklet—not so much. So I am taking a break to get this article done before I get fired!

A lot has changed since I wrote about **OpenType** in 2006... there are more options!

Type fonts were one of the biggest headaches that we had to deal with—most Mac users had Postscript fonts. These fonts were able to print correctly from our Postscript image setters, so it made the choice real easy. The other font choice was TrueType, mostly on the PC side, and there were certain incompatibilities between the two.

I'm using **Adobe Garamond Pro** to demo these features because my **Helvetica** is still a Postscript font... sorry.

## What is open type?

**OpenType**® is the result of uniting two powerful and widely used font formats, PostScript and TrueType, into a single font format. Developed by Adobe Systems Inc. and Microsoft Corporation, "**OpenType** brings these two technologies together and extends them with new typographic and line layout capabilities. **OpenType** will be the new standard for high quality type in print and on the web. The capabilities which **OpenType** will provide to font developers, application developers and end-users are truly exciting," as stated in the literature. It really does offer more options.

This is the really cool part. We no longer are limited to the 256-characters as before. With these **OpenType** fonts, we can access characters that either were never available or were relegated to "special" fonts that had to be obtained separately.

But enough chit-chat. I'll demonstrate some of these cool features using **Adobe Garamond Pro**.

## Open Type Features

**OpenType** fonts vary greatly in the number of type styles and kinds of features they offer. You can now find **OpenType** features in the **Character Styles** panel. The options are less than they were in 2006, but the **Glyphs Panel** has greatly increased your choices for newer type selections. Contextual Alternates are not available in **Adobe Garamond Pro**, but you'll still get the idea of more choices.

### Discretionary Ligatures

Font designers may include optional ligatures that should not be turned on in all circumstances. Selecting this option allows these additional optional ligatures to be used, if present. Look at the &t combination in the word selecting. This could give eyestrain if used in text too much or too small, and it can be turned off. This is a case where "less is more," and better off suited for larger text applications.

### Fraction

Numbers separated by a slash, such as 1/2, are converted to a fraction such as ½, when fractions are available. This means that if this feature is turned on, just typing ¼, ½, ⅓, will automatically create the fraction.

### Ordinal

Ordinal numbers such as 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> are formatted with superscript letters (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>), when ordinals are available. Letters such as the superscript a and o in the Spanish words *segunda* (2<sup>a</sup>) and *segundo* (2<sup>o</sup>) are also typeset properly.

### Swash

When they're available (in the Glyph Panel), regular and contextual swashes (which may include alternate caps and end-of-word alternatives) are provided. The regular W looks like this. In this font you get other options, as in the letter e or e.

### Titling Alternatives

WHEN AVAILABLE, characters used for uppercase titles are activated. In some fonts, selecting this option for text formatted in both uppercase and lowercase letters can yield undesired effects. Sometimes this change is so minimal, that you really can't discern the difference. But, it's in this typeface, so I used it.

### Contextual Alternatives


When available, contextual ligatures and connecting alternates are activated. This is turned on by default. Not available in this font.

### All Small Caps

For fonts that include real small caps, selecting this option turns characters into small caps. This keeps the letters and numbers proportional.

### Ornaments

**OpenType** font ornaments vary with the typeface. These are the only ornaments available in **Adobe Garamond Pro**.

**Brioso Pro**, on the other hand, offers a greater variety—

Depending on the **OpenType** font, the variety of options is amazing. It's not necessary to mix fonts to create ligatures, or fractions or even add swash characters—but, do get to know the options available in the font. There is even a "recently used" area so if you use that glyph a lot it's an easy access.

### Check the Glyphs Panel

There are more options, including Superscript/Superior & Subscript/Inferior, Numerator & Denominator, Tabular Lining, Proportional Oldstyle, Proportional Lining, Tabular Oldstyle, and Default Figure Style.

So if some of your typefaces seem to act a little weird, check to see if they are **OpenType** fonts and then see what options are activated.

## It's a wrap...

Even though **OpenType** fonts are cross-platform compatible, they can be offered in two formats: **OpenType PostScript (.otf)** or **OpenType TrueType (.ttf)**.

**OpenType PostScript** fonts are typically best suited for publishing and press use; **OpenType TrueType** fonts are ideal in situations where high screen quality is critical. You can still get them in the flavor best suited for your computer. Major font foundries are expanding their font libraries with **OpenType** fonts. So look for more in the future.

## Here's what I found!

It's a bad habit, I know, but at least it's cheap! You know I love vector artwork, but I also go gaga for swash characters and ligatures! So, I get these notices from **Mighty Deals** and of course I have to look (OK, there are notices that I can and do ignore, but it's like they know me!) Anyway, here are some of my new font choices. There were four fonts in a bundle (\$9) and they are (from top to bottom): Castrina Typescript, Vanessa Handscript, Syaquila Handmade and Lussira Brush Script.

Wonderful  
Wonderful  
Wonderful  
Wonderful

Unfortunately I ran out of space, because I typed out the words and this was the "original" version, in other words... no optional choices. What I can't show you now are the various glyphs that can be used to create headings for the holidays.

Oh, wait, I can do that next month so you can see how type can be the headline—with maybe just a little artwork.

Now it's time for me to get back to my high school class reunion booklet—and the excitement never ends!

*Until next month...*

Ellen Hanrahan hanrahan.in@att.net ©2015





# Don't Just Drink The Water, Eat It!

By Jeffrey Gitomer

Ask anyone in New York City why their bagels are the BEST in the world and they'll say, "It's the water!"

Ask anyone in Philadelphia why their cheesesteaks are the BEST in the world, and they will say, "It's the bread." Further questioning one will ask, "Why is the bread so different?" and they will say, "It's the water!"

Water? Really?  
Yes, water!

The unique water that's ADDED to the standard ingredients makes the food BEST.

So I'm going to ask you two questions: What's in your water? What makes your water different, better, than anyone else's water?

There are 7.5 elements of your water that I will challenge you make you no different than anybody else's water on the planet, and further challenge you that if you decide to improve those elements (your water), you can become the best in the world. Or at least the best in your marketplace.

**1. Your attitude water.** If you know and understand the classic definition of a positive attitude is, "The way you dedicate yourself to the way you think," then it's obvious that you can change and improve your attitude water by changing your morning routine. Wake up and start reading instead of watching TV. Reading a positive attitude book for ten minutes, highlighting, and taking notes about your thoughts, can begin a whole

new attitude mindset that will separate and differentiate you from all of your peers, prospects, and customers.

**2. Your belief water.** While I have talked about belief for years, I've never said what it would take to build and strengthen your existing belief process. Invest thirty minutes of your time and make a list of the five parts of belief. You must believe you are the BEST person for the job, have the BEST business and products, that you can differentiate FROM your competitors, and that the customer is better off having purchased from you. If you don't believe that your water is the best, how will you be able to transfer that message to anyone else?

**3. Your compelling message and enthusiasm's water.** Present a compelling message and you will immediately differentiate yourself from 99.9% of all the salespeople on the planet. These are people who communicate poorly, or simply talk in terms of themselves. By becoming a prepared and enthusiastic presenter, you will be perceived as sparkling water. The opposite of sparkling water is flat water. In France it's, "with gas" or "without gas." Starting to get the message?

**4. Your innovative ideas water.** When you bring an idea to a customer it shows that you have prepared in terms of them. Your idea is about them and how they win, or how they profit. Once you get in the groove of innovation in creating ideas it will spill over to everything that you do. That's hot water.

**5. Your follow-through water.** This water is the fulcrum point in the sale. Even if you have already made the sale, your customers expect both delivery and service in order to complete the sale in their mind. You will solve nothing until the customer receives your product or service, loves your product or service, and is completely impressed by the way you stay in touch and follow through.

**6. Your relationship building water.** Solid value-based relationships lead to repeat business and referrals. Do I need to say anything else about the importance and the value of this water?

**7. Your trustworthiness water.** This is slowly aged water. Trustworthiness comes from positive, favorable, consistent, truthful actions taken over time. Trust is not built in a day, it's built day-by-day.

**7.5 Your reputation water.** Reputation water is the most valuable of them all. It means the rest of your water has all been given and received positively. It means that you have consistently performed to the delight of your customer. And it means that anyone can find you on the Internet and see your positive postings and results. It means that you have proven yourself to your customers and in your marketplace. You can never have too much reputation water. It's my hope that your cup of reputation water runneth over.

**BEST PART:** When someone asks you why your sales are better than anyone else's, your response can now be, "It's the water!" – Keep 'em guessing, baby. Keep 'em guessing.

My water? I'm a Volvic water guy myself – switched from Fiji to France.

*Jeffrey Gitomer's real-world ideas and content are also available as online courses at [www.GitomerVT.com](http://www.GitomerVT.com). For information about training and seminars visit [www.Gitomer.com](http://www.Gitomer.com) or [www.GitomerCertifiedAdvisors.com](http://www.GitomerCertifiedAdvisors.com), or email Jeffrey personally at [salesman@gitomer.com](mailto:salesman@gitomer.com). © 2015 All Rights Reserved.*





# Attention Publishers and Sales Managers!

Your sales managers drive the success of your business. They often represent the first point of contact a potential advertiser has with your organization. Wouldn't it be helpful if your sales manager could S.H.A.R.E. the knowledge of others in the publishing industry to stay up-to-date on the best practices?

The IFPA is forming the sales managers Share Help and Resource Exchange (S.H.A.R.E.) peer group, and we know it will be one of the most valuable benefits you – and your sales manager – will receive.

## What Is It?

Every sales manager faces day-to-day challenges that are unique to leading a sales team. "How can I grow my team while still being an individual contributor? Why is finding good sales people so difficult? How do I stay motivated and motivate my team? Where can I go to learn from my peers, or when I have challenges?"

The S.H.A.R.E. peer group will enable a group of 8 to 10 front-line sales managers to work together as a team to develop their skills, share best practices, and solve common problems – while making each other more successful.

## Who Is It For?

This S.H.A.R.E. peer group collaboration is meant for sales managers in the free community paper industry. Sample topics for monthly group meetings include:

- QTD and YTD numbers: What are the challenges? What are you struggling with? What do you want help with from the group?
- Compensation Plans: What have you tried? What seems to work best?
- Measuring Success: What metrics do you measure? How do you conduct employee reviews?
- Technology: How are other publications outfitting their reps in the field? How is new technology implemented?



## How Does It Work?

The S.H.A.R.E. sales manager peer group will be limited to 8 to 10 members. Monthly hosted telephone conference calls (59 minutes max) will be conducted with planned agendas, plus time to address member requests. Skills development, networking and shared successes will be the focus. The connections will continue beyond the monthly calls with email groups, and direct communication between the members is encouraged.

## When?

Our introductory conference call will be October 14, 2015 at 11 a.m. EST. In this "get acquainted" initial call, we'll determine the best dates and times for future connections.

After the initial introductions, we'll jump right in on sharing some best practices for holiday advertising promotions and successful digital sales staff designs. Bring your ideas – and your questions – to share with your peers!

## What's the Catch?

There's no catch – simply the shared knowledge and experiences your sales manager can gain from his or her peers who are fighting similar battles. Instead of investing in more after-hours chamber networking functions, invest in your sales manager's future with your company.

There is NO CHARGE for the first 10 members to sign up. Imagine, unlimited access to the peer group for FREE! But sign up quickly, because space is limited!

If you're not sure this is a GREAT opportunity, pass this info along to your sales manager and see what they think.

## How do I Sign Up?

Sign up at [www.ifpa.com/share](http://www.ifpa.com/share). Look for the S.H.A.R.E. peer groups link.



by  
Bob Berting

# Nuts & Bolts of Sales Compensation

Every publisher is challenged by the desire to increase profits over the previous year. While everyone in a publication hopes for an income increase, the sales staff, being aggressive and go getters by definition, can be expected to always seek an improved compensation package.

## WHAT ABOUT STRAIGHT COMMISSION?

Most publishers equate a straight commission arrangement with the advantage of a built-in monitor that requires virtually no spur to keep the salesperson going full blast to bring in a lot of new business. Many times straight commission salespeople feel they are in business for themselves and can pursue their own activities without regard for the publisher's objectives. The better they are, the more freedom they want.

## SALES TERRITORIES AND SALES REPORTS

If sales territories are allocated geographically, the straight commission salesperson may be

sitting on the paper's largest accounts and thus might not be making the most of the sales potential in their territory by not effectively calling on the smaller accounts. From another viewpoint, commission salespeople may find themselves in a territory where there is less potential, thus severely limiting their compensation and creating a morale problem for the publisher, who might feel that the area deserves more exploration.

Sales reports, an important factor in management, may not be important, as are early morning sales meetings. After all, they are in business for themselves and sometimes, can't be bothered by "office details".

## BASE SALARY PLUS COMMISSION

A large percentage of publications use a base salary plus commission. Sometimes the commissions are linked to gains over the previous year or on sales management selected objectives. In many cases, the salary starts relatively high and is scaled

back every quarter to a relatively set level as commission sales increase. Many times, under a salary plus commission arrangement, the salesperson may be required to file a sales itinerary daily indicating which accounts he or she intends to call on, and at the end of the day, create a report on the results of their efforts.

## SALARY ONLY

A growing number of publications are paying their salespeople a straight salary—and here are some advantages to that plan of compensation:

Places emphasis entirely on the customer's needs, rather than the salesperson's pocketbook. Can be used as a selling tool when the client realizes the advertising consultant is not there to make recommendations based on a commission.

Turns your sales staff into creative marketing consultants rather than order takers.

Gives smaller accounts the same importance as larger ones.

*continued on page 20*

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100	\$39,900	\$5,000/mo.	\$60,000
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# When do employers need to be on-guard for age discrimination claims?

by Patrick Ogilvy, [pogilvy@kingballow.com](mailto:pogilvy@kingballow.com)

Across the majority of the country, federal courts view an age difference of less than ten years as insufficient to establish the basis for an age discrimination claim. For example, if a 65-year-old individual is selected for a job over a 67-year-old individual, courts will typically view that difference in ages as insubstantial. Employers should be especially aware of age discrimination law when making hiring, promotion or other employment decisions involving individuals that vary in age by ten or more years. As this case demonstrates, however, even if the difference is less than ten years, the potential for liability still exists.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit determined, in the context of an age discrimination claim under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA), an age difference of less than ten years between the complaining employee and the employee receiving a promotion creates a rebuttable presumption the age difference was insubstantial. However, in this particular case, although the age difference was less than ten years, there was evidence the employer considered age in general to be significant in making promotion decisions, and thus the employee established a prima facie case of age discrimination.

## NEW POSITION

The Department of Homeland Security established a new program for its border patrol agents whereby Assistant Chief Patrol Agents were split into an administration category, with a lower pay grade, and an operations category, with a higher pay grade. A 54-year-old border patrol agent was one of 24 eligible candidates ranging in age from 38 to 54 years who applied for the operations category position with the higher pay grade. Based on his score on a competency assessment, the border patrol agent was one of 12 candidates

selected for an interview, but was not selected for final consideration after the interview. Ultimately, four individuals were chosen for positions in the higher pay grade operations category ranging in age from 44 to 48 years old. The border patrol agent then sued the Department of Homeland Security, claiming the decision not to promote him to the operations position was age discrimination in violation of the ADEA.

The agency presented a non-discriminatory reason for not promoting the border patrol agent, claiming he lacked leadership, judgment, flexibility, and innovation. In response, the border patrol agent presented evidence the supervisor who was involved in the decision not to recommend the border patrol agent after his interview said in a staff meeting he preferred “young, dynamic agents” for the new operations position, and another agent confirmed hearing this statement. The border patrol agent also testified the same supervisor had repeated retirement discussions with him, even though the border patrol agent expressed no interest in retiring from the agency. The trial court found this evidence was insufficient to rebut the agency’s nondiscriminatory reasons for not promoting the border patrol agent and dismissed the case.

## OVERCOMING THE PRESUMPTION

Addressing the border patrol agent’s claims under the McDonnell Douglas burden-shifting framework, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit first considered whether the agent established a prima facie case of age discrimination. In particular, the Ninth Circuit considered whether the individuals selected for the operations position, who were an average of eight years younger than the border patrol agent, were substantially younger than the agent. The Ninth Circuit adopted the Seventh Circuit’s rule there is a rebuttable presumption of insubstantial age difference where the difference is less

from  
King & Ballow



than ten years. Thus, the Ninth Circuit determined the border patrol agent needed to show more than the eight-year average age difference to support his claim. The court found the border patrol agent’s testimony regarding the supervisor’s stated preference for promoting younger agents and the retirement discussions were sufficient evidence the agency considered age to be significant, thus rebutting the presumption created by the less than ten-year age difference.

The Ninth Circuit then accepted the agency’s stated legitimate, nondiscriminatory reasons for not promoting the border patrol agent as sufficient to shift the burden to the agent to show these reasons were pretext for discrimination. While the trial court found the supervisor’s discriminatory statements were not sufficient to rebut the agency’s stated nondiscriminatory reasons, the Ninth Circuit found the trial court erred by failing to consider that a speaker of discriminatory statements need not be the final decisionmaker of an employment decision. Here, the border patrol agent presented evidence of the supervisor’s influence, because: (1) the supervisor created the operations positions; (2) other interviewers deferred to the supervisor because he would supervise the promoted agents; and (3) the supervisor recommended the four finalists who were ultimately given the positions. Although other individuals made the final decisions, those individuals did not deviate from the supervisor’s recommendations. Thus, the Ninth Circuit found the supervisor influenced the hiring decisions, and his discriminatory remarks established a possibility of discrimination. Accordingly, the Ninth Circuit found the border patrol agent submitted sufficient evidence to warrant a trial on his claims.

*Reprinted from “Comment,” a publication of the law firm of King & Ballow, Nashville, TN. Mark Hunt is our consultant with King & Ballow and he can be reached at (615) 726-5497 or [mhunt@kingballow.com](mailto:mhunt@kingballow.com). The foregoing column is explanatory in nature and is not intended to provide legal advice as to particular situations.*

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# IFPA Book Club

**Title:** Green Eggs And Ham

**Author:** Dr. Seuss (Theodor S. Geisel)

**Date of Publication:** 1960

**Reviewed By:** Doug Fabian

*How would you describe this book's message?*

This book's message, to a salesperson, is to be sure not to be afraid to "ask," present your product in multiple ways, and to be persistent.

*What will be your lasting impression of the subject?*

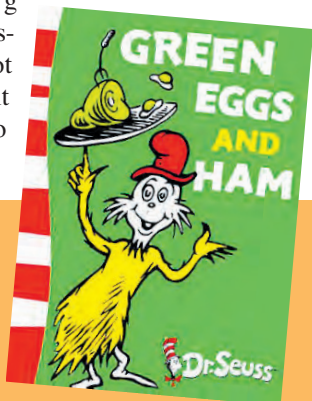
I think this is one of the most powerful sales books ever written. It reminds me that we are in a business that is simpler than we try to make it. The message of presenting your product (green eggs and ham) in a variety of ways, along with being persistent, is one that is tried and true. I take this book out at least once a year and read it (perform it) in a sales meeting. Good stuff.

*Please share a quote or two from the book:*

"Say! I like green eggs and ham! I do! I like them, Sam-I-am!" "I do so like green eggs and ham! Thank You! Thank You, Sam-I-am!"

*Why would you recommend it to others?*

I recommend this book as a quick pick me up. If you read it, it will remind you of the simpler, fun way of sales!. It is also a great coaching book. It doesn't take a lot of time and it never fails to motivate.



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—Gypsy C. Gallardo, CEO/Publisher, The Power Broker Magazine



# Onward Through The Fog



Our previous president, Bob Munn, has several catch phrases that personifies who he is. My favorite is something to the effect, “Nothing could possibly go wrong now.” And it invariably does. The other is one he used several times in his monthly articles in TIP, “Onward Through The Fog.”

Bob’s contributions to our association go well beyond his catch phrases. In fact, his service as president (both times) stands as a great example of selfless service. It reminds me of another non consecutive two-term president Grover Cleveland. But that’s probably better left for another article.

“Onward through the fog” reminded me of an incident that occurred to me while mountain climbing as a lad. Several of my friends decided we needed to climb a major summit in the skyline to the west of Seattle. The massive massif is appropriately named Mount Constance.

You approach the climb by first ascending from an old logging road up a rather steep trail that is only 2 miles long. The bad part about the trail is that those two miles are pretty much vertical. Anyway, after doing a pull up for two miles you land in a beautiful alpine lake called Lake Constance. The naming committee must have run out of names.

After spending the night at the lake we arose at 4:00 am to tackle the mountain itself. Normally, it takes about 6 hours of climbing to get to the summit and much less time to return if you fall back down to the lake.

As we ascended the snow and rock we were engulfed in the thickest fog I have ever experienced. This turned out to be good thing because we were just about to tackle “The

Fingertip Traverse.” We could have chosen the “The Terrible Traverse” but that sounded way to difficult.

The Fingertip Traverse demands that the climber jam his or her fingers into a crack in the rock and hand-over-hand across a rather exposed cliff. When there is no fog you can look between your dangling feet and see ice and rocks 3,000 feet below. But again I was fortunate and only saw fog.

I didn’t really know how treacherous it was until a year or two later. My father and I were going up the mountain to climb a different peak and encountered several mountain rescue people bringing down the bodies of two climbers that didn’t make it around the Fingertip Traverse successfully.

Having successfully negotiated the trial the three of us kept climbing through the fog. We would surmount one obstacle peering through the fog

hoping to see the top. Again and again our hopes were dashed. But it had only been a few hours so we figured we still had plenty of climbing to do.

After about 4 hours we topped on pinnacle and found there was no more “Up” left over. We had reached the top of Mount Constance. The fog kept us unaware of how difficult things were. I am still grateful for the fog.

Now, to bring this full circle, each of us has challenges that we work on summiting. Whether it is fear of approaching that new advertiser, learning something new on the computer, dealing with a difficult employee, trials at home, health, rude telemarketers, whatever, sometimes we simply have to keep moving forward even if the way ahead isn’t always crystal clear.

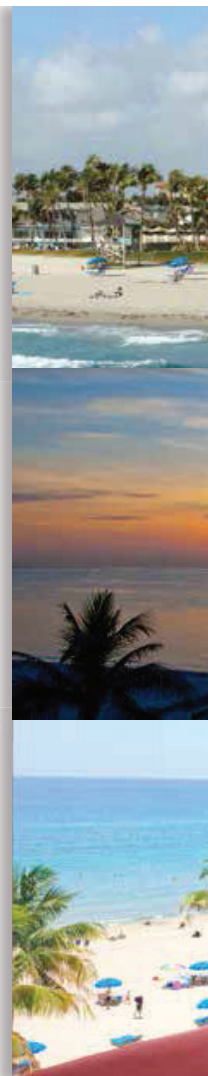
Just keep moving “Onward Through The Fog.” ■







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# Newspaper Pet Peeves

*Readers weigh in on what ticks them off*



Kevin Slimp  
The News Guru  
kevin@kevinslimp.com

While preparing to lead a webinar for a newspaper association up north last week, I took a survey of newspaper subscribers and nonsubscribers to find out what their biggest pet peeves are about newspapers. After looking over the results, I realized that most of the information is just as valid for free papers as it is for our paid brethren.

So last week, just one day before the webinar, I created a survey about customer service at newspapers and asked Facebook friends, not affiliated with the newspaper industry, to complete the short questionnaire. I hoped maybe 20 or 30 would take the time and give me some fresh, interesting, information to use during the webinar.

I was pretty surprised to learn that more than 200 folks had completed the survey over the next few hours and their answers weren't exactly what I expected. Of the respondents, 38 percent reported subscribing to a newspaper, while 62 percent answered that they did not.

Next, I asked subscribers: "What are your biggest pet peeves concerning your newspaper?"

By a large margin, "Not enough local content" took the prize. A full 38 percent of newspaper subscribers answered that lack of local content was their biggest pet peeve.

OK, that might not have been a huge surprise. However, their response to the second question did shock me. Just under 22 percent of newspaper subscribers answered that "Poor writing" was their top pet peeve. Honestly, I didn't think poor writing would crack the top five.

Delivery problems and poor design tied for third, with each receiving 13 percent. Billing and other problems followed in single digits.

And what about people who don't subscribe to a newspaper? "Poor writing" took the top spot with a hefty 37 percent responding that was their top pet peeve.

The number two reason respondents gave for not subscribing to a newspaper was "Not enough local news," at 27 percent.

Finally, I gained some useful insights from the nonsubscribers which could be used in my customer service webinar. A full 26 percent answered that their main reason for not subscribing was either "Delivery problems" (14 percent) or "Customer service" (12 percent).

When asked about the price of newspapers, 51 percent of nonsubscribers responded that "The price is too high."

Next week, I'll be working with a daily paper in Indiana for a couple of days. What did I learn from this survey that will make me a better consultant for that paper?

First, a large number of subscribers and nonsubscribers feel there is not enough local news in their newspapers. That

**"...the price might seem high because they feel like the quality isn't where it should be."**

didn't surprise me and it's been on my checklist.

Second, there is more concern over writing than I had suspected. Sure I figured Mrs. Feathers, my high school English teacher, lost sleep over writing quality. But a large percentage of both groups, especially nonsubscribers, seem to feel that poor writing is a major problem with their newspapers.

I will probably stress good design a little more than I have in the past. If 13 percent of readers say their biggest pet peeve with their newspaper is poor design, then it seems like something we should all watch closely.

For paid newspapers, it might not seem like there is a lot we can do when folks feel like the price is too high. But when I look more closely at these numbers, I realize that for a good number of subscribers and nonsubscribers, the price might seem high because they feel like the quality isn't where it should be.

What would I suggest to you? Go through this checklist and see how your paper would score, using the classic school grading system, with "A" for excellent, "C" for average and "F" for failing. Rate your paper on the following:

\_\_\_\_ Local content  
\_\_\_\_ Writing

Most of the survey respondents left optional comments. Here's some of what they want us to know:

*"Our paper used to be the go-to venue for finding out about upcoming events and now I'm forced to tediously search Facebook groups for upcoming events."*

*"They simply stopped delivering. I received no bill, no courtesy call. Two weeks after receiving no paper, I received a "sales" call to sell me a new subscription."*

*"The Morning Call was once a good paper. Now the writing is bad, the customer service is bad (missed a paper and was on hold forever) and the price is too high for the quality."*

*"A lot of news is readily available online, so it's hard to justify a newspaper subscription, especially when people post the most relevant information from the newspapers page."*

*"I hate seeing all the staff cutbacks at the newspaper. A lot of stories don't get covered, or at least covered from a local perspective because of this."*

*"I live in a large metropolitan area but the paper I subscribe to is the smaller suburban one."*

*"No point in subscribing when I can get it free on the internet."*

- \_\_\_\_ Design
- \_\_\_\_ Delivery issues
- \_\_\_\_ Customer Service

How did your paper score? I would suggest that every newspaper should score an "A" if it wants to remain viable in today's marketplace.

Some fixes are easier than others. And obviously, good writing, local content and strong design effect readers of free papers just as in paid papers. Go through this list with your staff and see which area could be addressed most quickly and make a plan. Then begin to create a long-term strategy to guide your newspaper toward an "A" in each of the five areas.



# Katie Thomas Receives Ben Hammack Award

The Ben Hammack Memorial Service Award is presented each fall during the Annual Awards Banquet to an IFPA member who exemplifies the attitude and willingness to serve the organization without concern for personal recognition. Ben Hammack of Star Publications, Gaylord Michigan was the icon that represented IFPA volunteers. This young man was always willing to help on any project, offering his time and creative advice to see the project through to completion. He died in July 1988, at the age of 34 from a heart attack at the finish of a 10K run.

I never had the pleasure of meeting Ben, as I was just a kid in this industry. I feel like this year's recipient is a whippersnapper in our world as this special award is presented this year. Personally, I have the highest respect for this person, often making calls to a cell phone or sending an email that I need to wait sometimes hours for a response. I know that a thoughtful answer to mostly hard questions is awaiting my question. I respect the care and thoughtfulness that this person puts into business and into life.

Y'all will agree that this is a special treat for me to present this award, when you find out that I drew the straw to recruit this person onto the board of IFPA. This was no easy task! I expected a quick "yes, sir", but got a thoughtful answer and a response that it would need to be thought over and analyzed so that the proper amount of effort could be put into the task at hand. Boy, am I glad the answer was "yes" and IFPA has benefitted greatly. This person grabs a hold of a task and not only does a

great job with it, but often turns it inside out and redefines success.

When I called her brother to get some good things to say about this person, I was told that he would think about it. And he thought, and thought, and thought. Then, he wanted to know if I really wanted GOOD things to say... there was so much other stuff. Actually, I got so many good things to say that I had to edit them down, or we would be here all day... Here are some of the things that her brother said...

-Procrastinator when it comes to personal decisions (more on that later)

-Determined

-Cares about the people that leads at work

-Shown great capacity to learn and grow as a person during her career and that is from a proud older brother

There are some clues...

- Really good cook

- Best aunt to her awesome niece and nephew

- Auburn fan

-Good tennis player

-Loves her dogs...Polly and Ruger

And, a direct quote...-She is a good "line dancer" or whatever that country music honky tonk dance stuff is called.

In addition to serving in many different capacities for IFPA, this person is responsible for coordinating the design and application of the new IFPA logo. Imagine finding a way to get 10 publishers to agree on anything.



I mentioned being a procrastinator in personal decisions...

If you know this person, you will have at least wondered what took her so long to get hitched. Well, she had to find the right guy... that was a customer... that needed to up the number of ads he was buying.

And, when I asked Douglas Fry for a quote concerning our winner, here is what he had to say...

When I first met Katie she was sitting in a high chair in her parents dining room. We all had dinner together, roasted chicken with great vegetables. Katie ate the chicken but, at the time, wasn't that fond of the veggies.

I have had the enjoyable experience of watching her grow up in our industry. She is a shining example of hard work, dedication, and love of family. She is a genuinely beautiful person inside and out. I know her parents are so proud of her. I am too.

I am so proud to present this year's Ben Hammack Award to a person who bleeds IFPA red, white and blue, my friend... Katie Thomas



# San Antonio Snapshots





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Some experience—3000.00 volume—salary:400.00

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Top Pro—8000.00 volume—salary: 800.00

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Commission only: 20% of paid receipts—a great way to make sure bills are paid before a salesperson is

paid.

There are probably many publishers reading this article who pay their people differently, but if so, please let me know at bob@bobberting.com.

*Bob Bering, newspaper marketing consultant, has published his new e-book for sales professionals in the newspaper industry entitled "Advanced Selling Skills For The Advertising Sales Pro." Salespeople can learn more about this publication by using the link [www.adsalespro.com](http://www.adsalespro.com) and see the table of contents as well as reading the complimentary first chapter. Payment of \$19.95 to download the 34 page e-book.*

Bob can be emailed at bob@bobberting.com or 800-536-5408. He is located at 6330 Woburn Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46250. ■

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