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President's Corner



Be More Than a Grill Master

Mike Kolbe

Along with camping and vacation time, grilling season hits full stride in August. As I've mentioned before, when it comes to food preparation in our house I contribute very little. I do, however, enjoy taking on the title of "Grill Master" occasionally.

The following is a tongue-in-cheek "Grilling Etiquette" piece I copied some time back to share with my wife, Tammy, who is one of the most energetic people I know. The point was to let her know how much I appreciate the effort she puts into our meals.

As you read this, think about who the "grill master" is in your office, and who actually does a majority of the work!

When Mike volunteers to do the grilling, the following chain-of-events are put into motion:

- 1) Tammy buys the food.
- 2) Tammy makes the salad, prepares the vegetables, and makes dessert.
- 3) Tammy prepares the meat for cooking, places it on a tray along with the necessary cooking utensils and sauces, and takes it to Mike who is lounging beside the grill with a beverage in hand.
- 4) Tammy remains outside the compulsory three-meter exclusion zone where an exuberance of testosterone and other manly bonding activities take place between Mike and friends without Tammy's interference.

Here comes the important part:

5) MIKE PLACES THE MEAT ON THE GRILL.

6) Tammy goes inside to organize the plates and cutlery.

7) Tammy comes out to tell the Mike the meat is looking great. He thanks her and asks if she will bring another beverage while he flips the meat.

Important again:

8) MIKE TAKES THE MEAT OFF THE GRILL AND HANDS IT TO TAMMY.

9) Tammy prepares the plates, salad, bread, utensils, napkins and sauces, and brings them to the table.

10) After eating, Tammy clears the table and does the dishes.

And most important of all:

11) Everyone PRAISES MIKE and THANKS HIM for his cooking efforts.

Don't be just the grill master in your office (or at home). Take care of all the essential duties and earn the praise that will follow.

Mike

From the Office



I am on a Mission and I Need Your Help!

Lee Borkowski

Hey Amazing Members!

Quick question: Who's got a cousin, best friend, neighbor, or former roommate who works at Kwik Trip/Kwik Star, Cassey's, Fareway, or Hy-Vee?

I'm on a mission, and I need your help. You see, I'm trying to connect with the media buyers at these fantastic companies to talk with them about our great papers and the wonderful things we can do for them. However, I'm not getting too far. The gate keepers are strong! But I firmly believe that with our collective superpowers, we can make it happen.

We all know the six degrees of separation theory, right? The idea that we're all just six social connections away from knowing anyone on the planet. Well, let's put that theory to the test and have a little fun while we're at it.

Think about it – your second cousin's best friend's college roommate could be our golden ticket. Or maybe your neighbor's aunt works in the marketing department at Hy-Vee. You never know until you ask!

So, here's the challenge: Dig into your rolodex (or, you know, your phone contacts) and see if you can help me make these connections. If you've got any leads, tips, or even the faintest whisper of a contact, let me know. Every tiny connection can help us reach our goal.

Let's make this a team effort and show the world what our network is made of. I can't wait to hear from you and see what amazing connections we can uncover together.

Thanks for being the best community ever. Let's get connected and make some magic happen!

Cheers,

Lee

P.S. The first person to successfully connect me to a media buyer at one of these companies wins bragging rights and a free coffee on me! Let the games begin!

P.S.S. While we're on the subject of networks... be sure to take advantage of our Summer Special: sell a 2x2 network ad (suggested retail price \$600) and receive a FREE 30-word classified ad with the same info, same week. It's a great 1-2 punch for advertisers looking to get maximum impact in the market!

Member News-

Introducing Our New Associate Member

WHITE WOLF

WEB OFFSET & DIGITAL PRINTERS

White Wolf Web is a third-generation family owned and operated printing plant located in Sheldon, IA. Since its founding in 1996, White Wolf has expanded from printing publications solely for its sister company, Iowa Information Media Group, to serving the needs of hundreds of weekly customers in a quad-state areas.

White Wolf Web offers web offset printing of full color circulars, broadsheets, tabloids, and books along with inserting, stitch and trim and mailing services. Our digital portion provides design services and custom printing of business cards, letterhead, envelopes, and much more.

[Click here to learn all about them.](#)



We don't make headlines...

PRINTING PUBLICATIONS OF ALL SIZES IN THE MIDWEST

WHITE WOLF
WEB & DIGITAL PRINTERS

...we print them

FAMILY OWNED • 103 CROSSROADS DRIVE • SHELDON, IA 51201 • JEFF WAGNER 712.631.4804 • SAM WAGNER 712.631.4852

Members Helping Members

Why Not Take Advantage of Another Great Member Benefit?

Elevate Your Customers' Success with Digital Advertising

We are thrilled to recognize the team at **iPromote**, our valued partner in bringing cutting-edge digital ad design and placement technology to our members. **Thanks to this collaboration, you have access to an advanced platform that empowers you to enter the digital advertising arena with confidence—at no upfront or monthly cost.**

iPromote goes above and beyond by offering comprehensive training, ongoing support, and even assistance with sales presentations via Zoom. The board is proud to offer this robust member benefit, and we're excited to see how it will help you drive success for your customers.

Our Digital Ad Network integrates the most widely-used digital advertising channels—search, web, mobile, social, video, and native—into one cohesive package. This omnichannel approach ensures your customers' messaging remains consistent across all platforms, boosting brand recognition and driving higher visibility.

By educating your customers on the benefits of digital advertising, you're not just helping them reach a wider audience; you're also enabling them to clearly define their target audience, measure success with real-time performance reports, and save on production costs with the flexibility to adjust campaigns on the fly.

Encourage your customers to take the first step towards greater visibility and success by utilizing digital advertising—and remind them that our platform is here to support them every step of the way.



WHY DIGITAL ADVERTISING

Let's start with the basics!
Digital advertising empowers you to:

- Reach a wider audience that complements your traditional advertising.
- Clearly define and serve ads to your target audience.



- Measure success with daily updated performance reports.
- Save money on production and distribution costs by utilizing updated digital creatives, messaging, and campaign settings that help promote greater visibility.

WHAT IS OMNICHANNEL ADVERTISING?

Our Digital Ad Network combines the most widely-used digital advertising channels and packages them together so your messaging is consistent online. And it boosts brand recognition by running ads on all channels, ultimately driving higher visibility.

With search, web, mobile, social, video, and native channels all housed within a single campaign, you can set one budget to be allocated across all channels, and track performance both per channel and per campaign to make adjustments quickly and as needed.

MVP at Work



Self-Improvement is Company Improvement

By Cory Regnier, Board Member
MVP Chair, Graphic/Composition
Citizen Publishing, Windom, MN.

For young professionals such as our MVPs, self-improvement is a crucial steppingstone in navigating the early stages of their careers. The modern workplace demands a diverse skill set and the ability to adapt to new technologies and methodologies. With our group we try to stay up to date on industry trends, develop critical soft skills and build a strong foundation for future leadership roles. Learning new skills, seeking mentorship and embracing feedback are vital components of this journey. These efforts not only enhance the MVP's performance but also demonstrate a proactive attitude that can be highly appealing to their employers, ultimately paving the way for accelerated career progression.

Beyond the individual benefits, seeking and engaging in self-improvement fosters a more dynamic and innovative workplace culture. When employees of all ages commit to personal and professional development, it creates an environment where knowledge is continuously shared, and collaboration is encouraged. This intergenerational exchange of ideas can lead to creative solutions and a more cohesive team dynamic. Organizations that promote self-improvement initiatives such as the MVP program, annual conferences, and the online training that MFCP offers, are likely to see increased employee satisfaction, higher retention rates and improved overall performance.

The importance of self-improvement in the workplace is undeniable. It empowers individuals to enhance their skills, adapt to changes and achieve their career aspirations. Furthermore, it cultivates a progressive and inclusive work environment where continuous learning is valued. Regardless of age, embracing self-improvement is a timeless strategy that benefits not only the individual but also the organization as a whole...which just happens to be the mission statement of the MVPs.

Kevin Slimp



An Updated Look at Affinity

Is it finally time to make the switch from Adobe InDesign to Affinity Publisher?

Kevin Slimp - kevin@kevinslimp.com

Back in “the day,” I used to write quite often about software. I still do, now and then. But like everything else, there seem to be fewer choices owned by more prominent vendors, leaving less to write about these days.

A few years ago, I wrote about a new software package product by Affinity. At the time, I wrote that Affinity Publisher – as well as Designer and Photo – weren’t ready for prime time. There were several tools unavailable that were necessary for the type of work newspapers do, and several features just felt a little clunky.

Affinity Publisher (an application similar to InDesign) has come a long way since then, and most of the issues I had with the application in version 1.x have been addressed in version 2.5. Before you cancel your Adobe licenses, read the rest of this column. I’m not suggesting that everyone go out and replace InDesign, Illustrator, and Photoshop, but Affinity Publisher might be the right tool for some of my readers.

Over the past few weeks, I’ve run into two newspapers that are using Publisher for page and ad design. When I asked how it was going, both told me it was going well. There are slight complications related to the learning curve of the new application, but overall, things seem to be going well.

I’ve found a few areas where Affinity Publisher doesn’t quite match up with Adobe InDesign, but for many, they won’t be dealbreakers:

- When users cancel their Adobe licenses, all those great fonts disappear. It might not seem like a big thing, but the fonts alone make the subscription price of Adobe software worthwhile to me. I remember when newspapers paid thousands of dollars for an Adobe font license.
- Affinity Publisher doesn’t have libraries. It has assets. This was another dealbreaker in early versions of Publisher because assets couldn’t be listed alphabetically, meaning finding a graphic or text in the asset manager could be very cumbersome. The good news is that assets can now be listed alphabetically. Honestly, assets don’t work as well as libraries, but they will work well enough for many users who haven’t become addicted to working with libraries.

- Data-merge, a feature I use daily in InDesign, is available in Publisher but is much “clunkier.” Many InDesign users don’t use data-merge, but it’s something to consider for those that do.
- I’m just not a fan of Affinity Photo. It does some things well, but I don’t get the results with CMYK images, which I’ve come to rely on from Photoshop.

Affinity touts its ability to open InDesign (INDL) files and does an admirable job. In two tests I ran using newspaper pages from InDesign, however, quite a few things moved around or went missing altogether. It’s probably not a dealbreaker, but it’s something to be aware of. Opening InDesign files in Publisher is not as seamless as some might expect.

I could write pages on this topic, but most readers would probably prefer an abbreviated review, so here goes. I like Affinity Publisher. I like it very much. However, I’m not canceling my Adobe subscriptions to make the switch. Why? More than any other reason, I’ve learned to use Adobe software from years (okay, decades) of use. There is a learning curve when moving to new applications that should be considered. Is it worth retraining a staff to move from a software that works very well to a new application to save \$69, \$99, or \$300 per month? For some, the answer is “yes.” For others, the cost to license software is a drop in the bucket compared to other costs.

If Affinity Publisher were a vastly superior product to InDesign, I wouldn’t hesitate to switch, much like when many of us switched from Quarkxpress or Pagemaker to InDesign. However, the only advantage of moving to Affinity software is the monthly subscription savings. For some, that’s reason enough. I sincerely hope the move works out well for those who make the switch. Heck, it will give more fodder for my future columns, and I always like that.

When I led my first Affinity webinar four years ago, I had more than 200 newspapers attend. I’m sure some of them have begun using Affinity apps in the years since then. If you’re one of those papers that made the switch, please write and let me know how it’s going.

Serif, a British software company, developed the Affinity suite of products in 2017. In March 2024, Serif was acquired by Canva, known for its online design platform. Through August 15, 2024, buyers can purchase Affinity software for \$83 (US), half the usual price (\$165 US). A 6-month free trial of Affinity software is available at affinity.serif.com.

Kevin Slimp has been a popular consultant and speaker in the newspaper industry since developing the PDF remote printing method in 1994. His upcoming webinars on design, circulation, and software can be found at newspaperacademy.com.

Kevin Slimp is former director of The University of Tennessee Newspaper Institute and founder of NewspaperAcademy.com.

Ad-Libs



Solving the Puzzle of Advertising

We've all heard challenges described as puzzles. With that in mind, let's take a look at a real puzzle and see how it relates to the particular challenges of creating advertising. Jigsaw puzzles, of course, are illustrations, photographs or other graphic representations that are cut into many pieces. The challenge is to fit them together, each piece in its special place in the overall picture. The more pieces in the puzzle, the bigger the challenge.

In my opinion, the most important part of a jigsaw puzzle is the picture on the box which shows what the completed puzzle looks like. Imagine the difficulty of working on a puzzle without that guide. Is it a beach scene or a cityscape? Is it birds of North America or antique sports cars? You'll never know unless there is something to follow.

It's just as difficult – and a lot more costly – to put together an ad campaign without a guideline to follow. If you dump the pieces out of the box and try to force them to fit, you'll end up with a jumbled mess that is destined to fall apart. But if you start with a plan, you'll have a picture to guide you along the way.

Here are some thoughts on advertising's puzzle box:

1. Start with research. Roberto, who speaks glowingly of the ad team he manages, once told me, “We wouldn't think of calling on clients unless we know as much as possible about them. Thanks to their web sites, online articles and our own files, we're in position to start in-person conversations on the same wave length. That usually establishes a good rapport, so we can shift our questions to their products, their prime audiences, and the history of their past advertising efforts. We focus hard on benefits, because that's the engine of the advertising.”

2. Organize the information. When working on a jigsaw puzzle, it makes sense to sort the pieces before putting them together. A little extra time now will save a lot of time later. Put the border pieces together (they have at least one straight edge). Then put all the colors together. And so on, until there's some order to the chaos.

It's the same in advertising. After you gather the right kind of information, take time to separate and prioritize the pieces. As you clearly identify a target audience and their buying motives, you'll see matches with certain product benefits. And as you consider the way those bits can fit together, the bigger picture will begin to emerge.

3. Translate the information into advertising. After you put the information into workable order, the next step is to develop an advertising theme and specific ads to carry out that plan,” Or as Roberto described it, “Strategy first, then tactics. In other words, the theme comes first, then the copy ideas, offers and illustrations.”

The point is simple: When you open the box to work with a new advertiser, make sure to have a good picture to follow.

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John Foust has conducted training programs for thousands of newspaper advertising professionals. Many ad departments are using his training DVDs to save time and get quick results from in-house training. Email for information: john@johnfoust.com

Ryan Dohrn



Fixing Cold Calling Fails

This month Ryan shares 3 ideas that can make cold calling more effective. He focuses on the following key points.

1. People respond better to a known entity
2. Become a known entity by following them on LinkedIn, comment, like, be relevant.
3. Respect their time by asking for a meeting of only 5-10 minutes.

Check out his podcasts below and learn all the tricks for making a cold call successful!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JAwJvCPAsYg>

Listen to Ryan's ad sales podcast, [Ad Sales Nation](#), on [iTunes](#) or on [Soundcloud](#). Keep up to date with Ryan's ad sales training advice on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/RyanDohrnLIVE>

Ryan Dohrn is an award-winning [ad sales training coach](#), a nationally recognized [internet sales consultant](#), and an international [motivational speaker](#). He is the author of the best-selling ad sales book, [Selling Backwards](#). Ryan is the President and founder of Brain Swell Media and 360 Ad Sales Training, a boutique [ad sales training](#) and [sales coaching](#) firm with a detailed focus on ad sales training, internet consulting, and media revenue generation. Ryan is also the Publisher of [Sales Training World](#).