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PAPERCLIPS

MFCP midwest free community papers
the official newsletter of Midwest Free Community Papers

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CHECK OUT MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS AND LEARN ABOUT OUR 2 NEW PROGRAMS!

Summer School for Sellers…and the Coffee's on Us!

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President's Corner

Lisa Miller

This Article from Jayde Vogeler is Too Good Not to Share

I wanted to take a moment to shine a spotlight on one of our own — Jayde Vogeler, this year's MFCP Graphic Artist of the Year**.** Jayde recently wrote an article for Publish, ACP's monthly newsletter, and it really struck a chord with me. It's one of those pieces you read and instantly think, *every sales rep and designer in this business needs to see this.*

In her article, Jayde makes a compelling case for why designers aren't just creating ads — they're an extension of your sales strategy. She talks about the importance of spec ads, the power of collaboration between sales and creative, and even gives a little shout-out to AI for helping with quick copy ideas when you're under the gun. It's smart, practical advice that you can put to work right away.

What's even better is that Jayde is part of ACP's Rising Stars program, a mentoring initiative very similar to the MVP program here at MFCP. It's a great example of the kind of talent and leadership that grows out of programs like these. I've personally had the pleasure of working with a couple of MVP participants, and I can tell you — their enthusiasm and fresh perspective have made a positive difference in our business.

Cory Regnier does an outstanding job leading our MVP program, and I encourage you to think about a young person on your team who might benefit from this opportunity. Nominations will open in November with the next MVP class starting in January. The MFCP MVP program is a great way to invest in the future of our industry – and as an MFCP member, participation is included as part of your membership. There is no cost to take advantage of this valuable benefit.

With Jayde's and ACP's permission, I'm thrilled to share her article with all of you. It's a quick, worthwhile read — and one I hope you'll pass along to your teams.

Click here to read Jayde's article

Click here to review the MVP Nomination form

From the Office

Turning Numbers Into New Business

It's not just about having the numbers….
it's about knowing how to use them.

Lee Borkowski

I've had more than a few conversations lately with members who tell me, *"Yeah, we did a CVC audit a while ago, but I'm not sure we really use it for anything."* Or, *"We should probably get our audit done, but it feels like a lot of work."*

Sound familiar? If so — you're not alone. And that's exactly why we're launching a brand-new, 3-part Zoom training series in partnership with our friends at CVC.

We're calling it **"Master Your Circulation Audit and Sell Smarter."** This isn't just a refresher course. It's a practical, no-nonsense guide to making the most of one of your most valuable (and free!) MFCP member benefits.

Mark your calendars:
Session 1: *Why Your Audit Matters* — **August 14 at 10:00 AM (CT)**
Session 2: *How to Get It Done* — **August 21 at 10:00 AM (CT)**
Session 3: *Turn Your Audit Into a Sales Tool* — **August 28 at 10:00 AM (CT)**

In these sessions, you'll learn:

Why your audit matters (Spoiler alert: advertisers care about it more than you might think.)

How to get it done without the stress — with simple, clear tips from CVC pros and a fellow publisher who's been through it.

How to turn those numbers into sales tools you can use every day to close more deals and boost your revenue.

I'm especially excited about the third session, where Big Green Umbrella will walk us through how they actively use their audit results to win business and open doors. Real numbers, real strategies, and real results you can put to work immediately.

All sessions are free for MFCP members — and they're quick, practical, and designed for busy people like you.

Watch your inbox for registration links, and I hope you'll plan to join us. Even if you've been through the audit process before, I guarantee you'll pick up new ideas to help you sell smarter.

Because at the end of the day, it's not just about having the numbers — it's about knowing how to use them. Hope to see you there! **— Lee**

MVP at Work

Overcoming Change in the Publishing Industry

By Julia Merten
Star Publications, Sauk Centre, MN
Territory Marketing Representative

When I first came to Star Publications - *Dairy Star* three and a half years ago I was what one would call a "rookie" to the publishing industry. I had no prior experience working in the industry, but I did have a strong affinity for dairy cows and the dairy industry. Our motto is "All Dairy, All the Time" so it was a perfect fit! Since then, I have developed a greater understanding of the publishing industry through mentors and the MFCP MVP Program.

At our most recent June MVP Zoom Meeting we discussed the current state of the publishing industry and where we see the future headed. It was an honest discussion filled with lots of great insights. Here are a few of my key takeaways:

Reaching readers where they are at: While print media will always be the bread and butter of our publishing businesses it is increasingly important to reach readers where they are at. One way we discussed it was via online print e-editions. Some publications offer this as a free service while others charge a subscription fee. Having an active social media presence where you can link online stories is another great way to reach readers. Over the last couple of months *Dairy Star* has started up a *Dairy Delivery Podcast*. Listeners hear actual footage from interviews that were conducted. I am excited to see the podcast catch on and how listeners respond.

Print is here to stay: While the publishing industry may be evolving we firmly believe that print is here to stay. Our readers and CVC Audits continuously tell us that print is a trusted source of news and print ads work driving readers to view a customer's website. Recently, my publication expanded our coverage area. I was amazed by how many businesses quickly jumped on board to advertise.

We are stronger together: Since becoming a part of the MVP group I have met many incredible mentors and learned valuable lessons. I believe everyone has something to gain from participating in the MFCP Network and attending a conference or event. I strongly encourage you to recommend your young employees for this group. MCN Network Ads are another way we are stronger together. Job hiring ads and auctions receive great feedback from participants in our network. Reach out to Lee Borkowski at director@mfcp.org for more information or to schedule a training session with your sales staff.

While the print publishing industry may be changing there is a lot to be proud of. Print is still very much "alive and well" and as an industry we will continue to grow and adapt to best serve our readers and customers.

Julie

Members News

Interested in Shaping the Future of MFCP?

Each year, the Midwest Free Community Papers Board of Directors reviews and considers potential candidates for board service. Though our board is currently full of committed individuals, members in good standing are welcome to submit their name for consideration.

Board service includes monthly Zoom meetings, participation on at least one committee, and attendance at our annual in-person planning session and meetings held in conjunction with MFCP events.

Those interested in being considered should complete the application form and submit it to director@mfcp.org. Applications are reviewed as openings or opportunities arise.

Download the application here

Members Helping Members

Summer School for Sellers…and the Coffee's on Us!

Who says summer is just for vacations? We've cooked up a quick, easy, and *actually useful* training opportunity for you and your team — and yes, there's a coffee break involved.

We're excited to share our brand-new MCN Classified Sales Training Video. It's a fast, AI-generated walkthrough that covers everything you need to know to confidently sell our MCN Classified network ads. Whether you're new to the program or just need a refresher, this quick session will get you up to speed.

And because every good class needs great materials, we've got you covered.

- A 4-page leave-behind handout you can share with prospective advertisers
- A simple call script to help open those sales conversations
- A link to our coverage map, so you'll know exactly where those ads will run
- A short questionnaire to wrap it all up — and when you complete it, we'll send you a $10 coffee gift card as a thank you!

It's summer school without the pop quizzes and with a little something for your favorite cup of joe.

Click here for your class materials.

Jump in, brush up, and claim that coffee — you've earned it!

Help Us Build a Valuable Member Resource!

We're excited to announce that our new **Member Amenities Survey** is officially live! This quick, 2-minute survey is designed to gather information about the services, resources, and capabilities each of our member publications offers.

Why are we doing this? Simple — when you have a question or need a recommendation, you'll be able to turn to a comprehensive, easy-to-use comparison sheet. Think of it like a hotel amenities list… but for publishers! Whether you're looking for someone who offers design services, specialty printing, distribution support, or digital ad placement — this resource will help you find the right connection within our network.

The committee has reviewed and approved the final setup, and now it's your turn! **We need your input to make this a truly valuable tool for everyone.**

The survey should take no more than **5 minutes** to complete.

https://forms.gle/6PRXuSDHzNHNjJcJ9

Thanks in advance for helping us build a stronger, more connected MFCP community!

Ad-Libs

Brand Loyalty is a Powerful Force

John Foust, Greensboro, NC

My grandmother Martha lived in Wilson, which is in eastern North Carolina. As a widow, she remarried later in life to a widower named Herman. I was in my twenties then, and it was a special privilege to see those sweet lovebirds spend their final years together.

A few years after they married, they moved to a retirement community in Durham, about thirty minutes away from Raleigh, where I was living.

Being so close, I visited them as often as I could. I remember calling before one visit to ask if there was anything they needed. Herman said he needed a can of Barbasol shaving cream from a particular drug store in Wilson. I was happy to do that and, although I mentioned that Barbasol was sold everywhere, he insisted that it had to come from that favorite drugstore. I ended up buying the shaving cream in Raleigh and took it to him, never letting on that it came from a different store. Everything worked out fine.

Brand loyalty is a powerful force. For years, Herman was loyal to Barbasol shaving cream and that drug store. He wasn't unpleasant about it at all; that was simply his choice. Like Herman, we all have loyalties to specific brands. Some of us wouldn't think of driving anything but a Toyota. Some always have Cheerios in their kitchen cabinet. And others will drive past two grocery stores to get to the store they like best.

Branding is a big topic that has inspired countless books, articles, seminars and lectures. But for our purposes today, let's narrow it down to one question: How can you deal with an advertiser who doesn't consider your newspaper, because of a strong loyalty to another advertising choice?

Franklin, who has been a sales manager for many years, told me about his team's approach. "We acknowledge that loyalty runs deep in the advertising industry. We have plenty of advertisers who are loyal to us, so we understand how some people are loyal to others. Maybe a business has had good results running ads somewhere else. Maybe they have a long-term relationship with the other ad department. Or maybe it's a comfortable habit or a resistance to the perceived difficulty of setting a new course.

“When we hit that brick wall with a potential advertiser, we do two things,” Franklin explained. “First, we develop a plan to stay in touch. We don’t become a pest, we just reach out to them every now and then to keep ourselves top-of-mind. We might send information about a relevant special section or even an interesting article about their favorite team.

“The second thing is to watch carefully for signs of change in their business, because change may indicate a willingness to consider new ideas. Is there new ownership or management? Is there a new ad manager? Are they planning to open a new home office or store location? Big or small, a hint of change may open the door for a sales appointment.”

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

Selling Amidst Economic Uncertainty

This month Ryan suggests you take a look at 3 core strategies to help boost sales in this time of economic uncertainty.

1. Concentrate on what you can do to help them right now
2. Recognize what type of buyer you are dealing with- ego driven/logical/ emotional
3. How relevant are you being in your outreaches

Learn more about how and why to take advantage of these core values by clicking on the link below.

https://360adsales.com/ad-sales-training-podcast/

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*.

Kevin Slimp

Think Big, Think Small

5 things to grow and 5 to trim down

Kevin Slimp - kevin@kevinslimp.com

A benefit of experience is understanding that you probably don't know nearly as much as you once thought you did. One of the things I love most about leading focus groups is being surprised. Let's face it, not much is surprising anymore. With that in mind, I'd like to share ten findings related to size that often appear during newspaper focus groups.

5 things to grow:

Font sizes of headlines. Bigger fonts are no more expensive than smaller fonts. Use a font that draws attention to the story. Let's face it: we put much effort into increasing readership. One of the simplest ways I know to draw more readers to the page is by using bigger fonts in our headlines.

Top of the front page. In my travels, I've heard this area called the masthead, nameplate, and all types of other names. I simply refer to it as "the flag." The area at the top of page one is crucial in getting potential readers to pick up the page. Too many newspapers have tiny flags. Let's face it: this is prime real estate for advertising your newspaper. Draw readers with a large flag.

Letters to the editor. Readers love letters to the editor. Every focus group asks for more of them. Try to recruit more readers to send in letters to the editor.

Space for kids. Whether half a page or a whole section, areas designed for young readers are popular in newspapers; it's a win/win. Anything we can do to attract young families and readers is a plus. I've learned even older readers enjoy reading pages intended for young readers.

Body Text. Let's face it, nobody likes reading text that's too small. I notice focus groups often say text is "alright," because they've become so used to small text. However, as soon as the redesigned version of their paper comes out, readers will praise the "easier to read text." I once redesigned a newspaper in Kansas. A few weeks later, the publisher sent me an email from the local optometrist. He thanked her for the larger text and noted that many of his clients thought their site was improving because reading the newspaper was so much easier.

5 things to trim down:

Line weight. Thin is in, and we're talking about more than waistlines. Like many other areas, heavy is out when it comes to design. Never use frames heavier than .5 point. I tend to use .4 in redesigns.

Wordy headlines. Wait. Didn't I just write to have bigger fonts in headlines? Yes, I did. Bigger fonts, fewer words. The headline draws the readers to a story. The subhead tells the story. Use as few words as possible in the headline, then let the subhead do the rest of the job. For example:

School board meets to examine budget, lowering amount set aside for extracurricular activities

Instead, let's use a headline/subhead combo:
School board cuts activities
Board meets to examine budget, lowering amount set aside for extracurricular activities

Length of stories. A publisher in Tennessee told me about a study done by his paper. They sent readers copies of the paper, along with red pens. They were asked to circle everything they read in the paper. Not just the headlines, but everything. What was learned? Most readers never get past two paragraphs. Very few readers are reading your long stories. Fewer words means more space for larger body text and white space.

Wasted space in photos. Cropping is an art. I've been an adherent to the "shoulder rule" since learning about it from Ed Henninger in a class at The University of Tennessee. In most photos, the area outside the shoulder(s) is unnecessary. Obviously, there are exceptions to every rule, but cropping out blurry trees, rooms, etc., makes it possible to enlarge the most interesting area of a photo.

Paragraph length. Long paragraphs lead to suffering eyes among readers. Keep paragraphs to no longer than 4-6 sentences. Remember, the RETURN key is your friend.

I bet many of you have items you'd add to this list. I always stop when I reach my 800-word limit (self-imposed, by the way). Send your suggestions to me at kevin@kevinslimp.com, and you might help me become even better at redesigning newspapers. I may not know as much as I once thought I did, but I'm always happy to learn more.

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.