AUGUST 2025

PAPERCLIPS

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Join us for a **3-part webinar series** focused on **demystifying the CVC audit process** — and turning your audit into a powerful sales tool.
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Session 1- August 14

Understanding the CVC Audit — Why It Matters
What is the audit, what does it include, and how can it elevate your sales game? Hear directly from Tim Bingaman and the CVC team as they walk you through the purpose and power of a verified audit — and how advertisers rely on it when making buying decisions.

Session 2 August 21

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Session 3 – August 28

How to Use Your Audit to Sell More Advertising
Publishers who use their audit **every day** in sales know its power — and they're ready to share how they make this **valuable member benefit work for them**. Led by Jolene Goodman and the Big Green Umbrella team (with special guests), this session is packed with practical ideas and winning strategies.

President's Corner

Holidays…Vacations…Days Off… REALLY?

Lisa Miller

Every week leads into every month and suddenly the year is gone. It is hard to believe we have officially hit August already. We are all guilty of getting into a routine. Most weeks of the year we develop habits of what needs to be completed each day. Each of our daily duties have a different focus, but the end result is always a completed publication. One way or another it always goes to press.

But then there are those nasty holidays that always seem to mess up our routine. Most of us are probably really good at Monday holidays. In fact, we probably have a routine already in place for those. But then one of those other days of the week comes into play and we have to work around it. Friday holidays are far and few between, but how nice to leave the office on a Thursday for a three-day weekend.

Monday then rolls around and that holiday has messed up everything. Do we take in late ads? We are still waiting on a name confirmation from that great holiday photo taken over the weekend, but are due to press in an hour. And, amongst all of that, fielding phone calls because due to the holiday their paper wasn't delivered.

Often times I have wondered if holidays are worth it. Is it worth the stress beforehand in order to prepare to have the office closed? Early deadlines mean less time to sell for that issue.

One day off for a holiday — OK we can do that. But then how do we fit a vacation into the mix?

Leaving the office for more than a day at a time requires planning and coordination. I tend to back-track my steps for the week to make sure that on the days I am off everything is getting taken care of. Is the office being opened for the delivery driver? Is there gas in the vehicles? And most importantly … can I walk out without having to worry about it? I am not sure the last one will ever happen, but I fully trust my team to make sure they grab the server if the building is on fire.

Recently, I took an extended family vacation — five whole days. Crazy enough … someone was watching from above because my reception was horrible. I wasn't getting emails into my phone. My Zoom workplace wasn't blowing up. At first, I thought "man, things are great." I started enjoying my surroundings. Then a simple text with a request for something out of my email came in. It hit me … wait I should have had that email by now. I couldn't get anything to pull up. I have been very hesitant to hook up into any public wi-fi after I got hacked one time. But in this instance, we were in a restaurant and I did. Then the gut feeling hit with over 240 emails flying in. I took it all in stride and made a couple calls that needed to be made and took care of what needed to be done.

Was that a horrible feeling that I had emails that weren't responded to right away? Of course, however, did anything happen that was life threating … absolutely not.

The last night I was on vacation, I watched the sunset and reflected on the week with my family. I loved seeing the smiles on their faces while they were taking in all the moments and memories. I had been provided time to ground myself and reflect on my why. We all need that time for ourselves. My mom has always said to me, "If you don't take care of yourself, you can't take care of others."

Holidays will come and go. Vacation days will either be taken or lost. The choice is yours. Figure out what makes you glow within in order to be better. Sparks might fly in order to improve your publication and more importantly you. I am a solid believer everyone is better for taking the time for themselves.

From the Office

Co-op Advertising Makes a Comeback – Are You Ready to Be Included?

Lee Borkowski

It's been years since we've talked seriously about co-op advertising, but a national mattress manufacturer is bringing it back in a practical—and profitable—way.

Here's how it works: The manufacturer produces promotional inserts for Restonic and Spring Aire mattresses. There are two size options: 8.5"x11" or 11"x17" folded to 8/5"x11" 60lb, gloss text. The inserts are provided to participating furniture stores, who have their own message printed on the reverse side—maybe a coupon, store hours, or a local offer. Once complete, the inserts are placed in local publications to drive traffic and boost mattress sales.

The frequency with which a furniture store can run the insert depends on how many mattresses they've sold. So, the more beds they move, the more often they get to run the ad. This is a true co-op program: a national brand footing the bill to help local retailers drive traffic, and a local paper benefiting from the insert printing and distribution.

Sounds like a win-win, right? But here's the catch: you can't be included in the plan if the printer can't get ahold of you.

Mark Helmer of Helmer Printing, Beldenville, Wisconsin is the printer handling the project. Mark shared that while many furniture retailers would rather handle payment and placement themselves (to get the best local rate), most are unfamiliar with the insert process. That means that he takes on the task of calling publications directly to get the details needed to book the placement—and he's running into a lot of dead ends.

In his words:

"It can be challenging to find this information on websites or through phone prompts. The menus usually default to classifieds, obits, or display ads, with no option for preprints. And when you do reach someone at the front desk, they often don't have the answers we need."

He went on to say that in the past, publications trained staff to be able to answer these calls on the spot. That made things quick and easy—and it meant more inserts got placed. Today, time-strapped agencies, printers and clients don't have bandwidth to chase down data. If they can't get an answer fast, they move on to the next paper.

Here's what most are looking for when placing a preprint insert:
• Quantity needed
• Deadline for receipt
• Contact at the receiving location
• Sales contact (if different)
• Circulation map
• Info on zoning, routes, or full coverage options
• Insert rates (when available)

Mark shared the name of a publication that's doing a great job of making the info he needs easily findable. The name of the publication is the *Intercounty Leader* and they are located in Frederic, Wisconsin. Their website offers a clear map and insert rate sheet—easy to find and download. Check out their site at: https://www.iccpaonline.com

So, now you may want to ask yourself: how easy is it for your publication to be included in the next co-op campaign? Are your circulation and insert specs easily accessible online? Can your team confidently answer questions from someone looking to place a preprint? If the answer to all of those questions isn't "yes" then you've got some work to do!

This insert program is a real opportunity for you to secure more business for your publication. Let's not miss it because a buyer got caught in your voicemail.

Now, go and get those inserts!

Lee

P.S. Here's a pro-tip from Mark that I really like….

Call Yourself! When was the last time you called your own office pretending you were a customer or partner? It's one of the easiest ways to spot friction points in your process—and one of the fastest ways to fix them. Try it today. Call your publication using the *main public phone number*—just like a new advertiser or vendor would. Pretend you found the number online, in one of your ads or from a friend. Can you easily reach someone who can help? Is it a quick and smooth experience for someone who knows nothing about your organization? Remember, you only get one chance to make a great first impression.

Do you still have questions? Feel free to reach out to Mark: mark@helmerprinting.com

MVP at Work

Maintaining Organization in the Workplace

By Sarah Middendorf
Special sections coordinator, staff writer,
Star Publications -Sauk Centre, Minnesota

Most professionals understand the importance of staying organized in our line of work. With deadlines flying all over the place, ensuring nothing is missed is key. I have been in my position — and the newspaper industry — for about a year and a half. The one thing I learned quickly is to write everything down. No matter how important, I write it down or I forget it.

Within my position I manage roughly 50 special sections throughout the year as well as write for Dairy Star. Checklists, post-it notes, and spreadsheets have quickly become my best friend. Between all of the special sections and newspapers we have I would not have been able to keep anything straight. Being able to throw away a post-it note or check off something from my list have become a highlight to my day.

Although the checklist is never ending, being able to take a task off of that list is progress in my book.

Another way I strive to maintain organization is by using a six-by-nine-inch notebook. This way I cannot lose notes due to falling on the floor or mysteriously ending up in the trash bin. The beauty of this is that each piece of paper has two sides that are usable.

For my special sections, that's a whole different type of organization. Each of the special sections have a file folder and is stored in a two-drawer filing cabinet. A copy of any past issues from the previous 2-5 years are stored there as well as potential story ideas for the next edition.

This type of filing works really well for me and my coworkers. It allows anybody to come over to my desk and find what they need to look at with ease. As we are going about the year, if we find a story idea that would work well for a specific special section, we can print it off and place it in the correct folder.

Whether its file folders, post-it notes or spreadsheets, there are many ways to stay organized at work. What is your favorite organization method?

Sarah

Members in the News

Joey and Lindsey Young debut on PBS *Market to Market- Kansas!*

We're proud to share that fellow MFCP members Joey and Lindsey Young of Kansas Publishing Ventures were recently featured on *PBS's Market to Market – Kansas*! The segment offers an inspiring look at their unwavering commitment to community journalism, creative community engagement, and their efforts to keep local newspapers thriving despite industry challenges. From mentoring student paper carriers to launching training programs for non-journalists, the Youngs are truly keeping the heart of local news beating strong in Kansas.

Kansas Newspaper Publishers Try New Strategies | Iowa PBS https://share.google/rYo4hOb-croa65vRw3

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Members Helping Members

Simply said... this is ‘purrfect’ !

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THE FABULOUS RAG DOLL CAT

1. THE ALLURE OF THE RAGDOLL: A GENTLE GIANT'S CHARM

The Ragdoll cat is beloved for its stunning beauty and remarkably placid temperament. Aptly named for their tendency to go limp and relaxed like a toy doll when picked up, they are the epitome of a companion feline. These large, semi-longhaired cats are defined by their striking, soulful blue eyes and soft, silky coat, which often comes in pointed color patterns. Beyond their looks, their personality is the main draw. Ragdolls are known for being affectionate, gentle, and even "dog-like," often following their owners from room to room and greeting them at the door.

Their docile nature makes them an excellent choice for families with children and other pets. They are not overly demanding or hyperactive, preferring a cuddle on the sofa to climbing the curtains. They communicate with soft, musical chirps and meows rather than loud yowls. This combination of a calm demeanor, loving personality, and breathtaking appearance has cemented the Ragdoll's status as one of the world's most popular cat breeds. For those seeking a truly interactive and gentle friend, the Ragdoll is an unparalleled choice, offering quiet companionship and endless affection.

2. WELCOMING YOUR RAGDOLL KITTEN HOME

Bringing home a Ragdoll kitten is an exciting experience. To ensure a smooth transition, preparation is key. Before your kitten arrives, designate a quiet, safe room as their initial base. This space should contain a litter box, fresh food and water, a comfortable bed, and a few simple toys. This allows the kitten to acclimate to the new sights and smells without feeling overwhelmed. Kitten-proof your home by securing loose wires, removing toxic plants, and ensuring window screens are secure.

When you introduce your Ragdoll kitten to the family, do so calmly. Supervise interactions with children, teaching them to handle the kitten gently. Introductions to other pets should be gradual and carefully managed, allowing them to get used to each other's scent first. Schedule a visit with your veterinarian within the first week for a health check-up and to plan for vaccinations. Most importantly, give your new companion plenty of gentle attention, using soft tones and positive reinforcement. Patience and a loving environment will help your Ragdoll kitten quickly grow into a confident, affectionate member of your family.

3. EVERYDAY CARE: GROOMING, DIET, AND PLAY

Caring for a Ragdoll's physical needs is essential for their health and happiness. Despite their luxurious, semi-long coat, their fur is silky and has a low tendency to mat. However, regular grooming is still necessary. Brushing your Ragdoll two to three times a week will remove loose hair, prevent tangles, and reduce hairballs. It also serves as valuable bonding time. Regular nail trimming and dental care, including tooth brushing or dental treats, are also vital aspects of their routine maintenance.

For diet, a high-quality, protein-rich cat food is crucial to support their large frame and maintain lean muscle mass. Monitor their portions carefully, as their placid nature can make them prone to obesity. While Ragdolls are relaxed, they are also playful. Engage them daily with interactive toys like feather wands, laser pointers, and puzzle feeders. This not only provides essential exercise but also satisfies their intelligent and curious minds. Due to their trusting nature, it is strongly recommended that Ragdolls remain indoor-only cats to protect them from outdoor dangers.

4. ENSURING A LONG AND HEALTHY LIFE FOR YOUR RAGDOLL

While generally a robust breed, Ragdolls are predisposed to certain genetic health conditions. Responsible breeders will screen for hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM), a common form of heart disease in cats. When choosing a kitten, always ask the breeder for health clearances for the parents. Like many larger breeds, they can also be susceptible to joint issues. Maintaining a healthy weight through proper diet and regular play is the best way to protect their joints.

Regular veterinary care is non-negotiable. Annual check-ups allow your vet to monitor your cat's overall health, administer necessary vaccinations, and perform preventative care like dental cleanings. Be mindful of their urinary health, as they can be prone to bladder stones. Ensuring they always have access to fresh, clean water can help mitigate this risk. By being proactive with their health, choosing a reputable breeder, and providing a safe and loving indoor environment, you can ensure your gentle giant enjoys a long, happy, and healthy life by your side.

Members Helping Members

CVC Made Simple…It's as easy as Sessions 1, 2, 3!

Want to boost your publication's credibility, earn advertiser trust, and unlock the full value of your MFCP membership?
Join us for a **3-part webinar series** focused on **demystifying the CVC audit process** — and turning your audit into a powerful sales tool.

Training Schedule:
Thursdays at 10 AM CT
Begins August 14

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Session 2 – August 21

How to Get Your Audit Done — Step-by-Step Guidance
Behind on your audit? You're not alone. This session is designed for publishers who need a clear, practical roadmap for getting caught up.
Learn:

- How much time it really takes to gather the data
- Who on your team should be involved
- Tools and tips to stay organized
- How other publishers overcame delays and got it done

You'll walk away with everything you need to feel confident tackling your audit — no matter how long it's been.

Session 3 – August 28

How to Use Your Audit to Sell More Advertising
Publishers who use their audit **every day** in sales know its power — and they're ready to share how they make this **valuable member benefit work for them**.
Led by Jolene Goodman and the Big Green Umbrella team (with special guests), this session is packed with practical ideas and winning strategies.
We'll cover:

- How to weave audit stats into every sales pitch
- What data points advertisers care about
- Real proposals that close deals
- Confidence-building tools for your sales team

This session is your playbook for turning verified data into stronger sales and increased revenue.

Remember: Every MFCP member publication is eligible to receive a **complimentary CVC audit** — a true member benefit designed to support your success. Make sure you're getting every ounce of value from your membership. Register here and we'll see you there!

CIRCULATION VERIFICATION COUNCIL

Ad-Libs

Advertising Lessons from a Car Wash

John Foust, Greensboro, NC

Jerry used to be in the car wash business. One day he was feeling down when he got home after work. When his wife asked him what was wrong, he said, “There were five customers who complained today.”

She asked, “How many cars did you wash today?”

He said, “Six hundred at that location and about eighteen hundred at the others.”

She smiled at him and said, “Hush!”

Jerry told me that his wife’s remark put the problem into perspective. His focus on the handful of complainers had kept him from thinking about the overwhelming number of happy customers that day. “Customer service has always been the most important thing to me and the team,” he explained. “We want everybody to be happy, but I have to remind myself that people are people and not everyone is going to be happy every time. Every now and then, we’ll miss a spot.”

The numbers reveal that Jerry has an excellent record of customer service. Those five complainers represented just 1.25 percent of his customers at that location and an even smaller percentage of the total customers that day in all of his car washes. Jerry’s big heart is one reason he built such a successful business. His wife was reminding him to be grateful for the 99-plus percent who were happy.

There is a famous quote which is attributed to the poet John Lydgate and was later adapted by Abraham Lincoln: *“You can please some of the people all of the time, you can please all of the people some of the time, but you can’t please all of the people all of the time.”*

Perfection is a strange thing. On one hand, it drives us to create the best possible quality. But on the other hand, it makes bad news (no matter how small) stand out from the good news (no matter how big). On some occasions, perfection keeps us up at night.

Jerry's story reminds me of Alicia, who has managed an ad team for many years. She once said, "We teach our team to strive for perfection, but also to accept that sometimes things get messed up.

"When mistakes happen, we do three things. First, we apologize and do everything we can to correct the problem, even if we discover it before the advertiser does. Staying ahead of the situation can keep it from getting worse.

"The second thing is to learn from the mistake. One of my favorite sayings is, *'There are two outcomes: successes and lessons.'* The real tragedy of a mistake is when no one learns anything.

"The third thing is to celebrate the things that are going right. We deal with the blunder, then let it go and focus on the good. That's a big part of maintaining morale in the ad department, or in any department in the newspaper."

Alicia makes a great point. Dealing with mistakes is a little like a car wash. Below the dirt and grime, there's a nice shine.

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

Super Sellers Do These 3 Things

This month Ryan focuses on what makes a sales plan successful. And, you guessed it, there are 3 main components.
Find out just how making a time-blocked daily schedule, using a task app like Google Tasks to help prioritize your day, and Retention planning can put you in the Super Seller Group!
Just click the link below:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V_0ELPbO0kw

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

It's Time for Fresh Ideas

Here are some ideas that are working in newspapers right now

Kevin Slimp - kevin@kevinslimp.com

There was a time when I kept track of how many newspapers I worked with on-site. After 1,200 or so, I stopped counting. Add to that the hundreds of newspaper staff who attended The University of Tennessee Newspaper Institute, which I directed for 21 years, and the hundreds of newspaper staff I've worked with online over the past twenty years or so, and the total gets almost ridiculous.

After working with so many newspapers, it would be impossible not to pick up a few ideas along the way. One of the favorite aspects of my work these days is helping newspapers develop new ideas for their pages. Sometimes, they come off the top of my head. Most of the time, however, these ideas come from newspapers I've recently visited.

Bullet lists seem to draw a lot of responses from my readers, so allow me to share my thoughts in the form of a list titled "Fresh Ideas to Draw Readers to Your Pages." These aren't all new ideas. We've simply gotten out of the habit of including some ideas in our papers.

Fresh Ideas to Draw Readers to Your Page

Present a page in the form of social media

Around 2000 or so, a Wall Street analyst specializing in media invited me to lunch to discuss an idea. Always one to accept a free lunch, I visited with him about an idea a group of investors developed using what's now called "social media" to create a website that would draw college students to post their thoughts and photos. I was so busy traveling to speak at conferences that I turned down the opportunity to lead the effort. I just didn't see how money could be made on a free website (their idea was to make money selling academic books on the site). I consider that one of the three dumbest career decisions I've made.

I've since learned that people actually do love to share their thoughts and photos, and – thanks to the suggestion of a young publisher in Colorado – "Photos of the week" are becoming popular in most of the papers I work with. I suggest a full page be set aside each week for submitted photos. Pick four or five and frame them, giving them the look of a photo album, and put them in the same location, on a color page, each week.

Person on the street feature

About one-fourth of the newspapers I've worked with this year offer a "person on the street" feature each week. Often, these are found on the left half of page 2. I'm not sure how that became a common location for this feature, but it seems to work. While leading focus groups, I've learned that this is often one of the favorite parts of the newspaper for readers, whether they're reading in print or online. An added benefit: It's a good way to get young adult faces in the paper.

Feature a human-interest story on the same page each week

A few years ago, a young reporter in Canada wrote to me in a panic. "We have a weekly news meeting where I'm assigned a story. This week, they told me to come up with my own story. What do I do?"

I laughed (to myself) and answered her question. "Go out in your community and find someone older than 90 years. Ask them to share their life story."

You guessed it. A week later, she wrote me to report that readers were writing to tell her it was the best thing she'd ever written. The 20-year-old reporter was ecstatic.

Readers like knowing where to find things. Put your human-interest story on the same page each issue.

Build reader rituals

Predictability brings loyalty. That's true in a lot of areas, especially newspaper readership. Find a few new weekly ideas to include in your newspapers. Some that I've seen work are:

Student journalism page: Partner with schools to publish student-created pages monthly.

Birthday shout-outs (sent in via email by readers)

Historical photos: Most newspapers have a history section that includes stories from the past. Consider adding an image from the past in each issue of the paper. Make it prominent to draw the reader.

Weekly polls or "sound off" column. Print community-submitted responses to a weekly question, e.g., "What business we don't currently have would you like to see open in our community?"

Redesign the Community Calendar

In focus groups, I often find the community calendar is one of the two most-read parts of the newspaper. Rather than including a bland listing of events, make an effort to design an attractive community calendar area each week.

That's 800 words. My work is done.