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President's Corner



New Year..... New Board President!

Julia Thompson

Happy New Year from your happy new board president. For those of you that don't know me, my name is Julia Thompson and I am the publisher of the Freeborn and Mower County Shoppers in Albert Lea and Austin, MN. I started at the Freeborn County Shopper as a sales rep 30 years ago and I attended my first MFCP conference in 1994. Time flies.

When I'm not at work I spend my spare time with my family, friends or volunteering. I have a daughter who is a senior in high school and a son who is attending his first year of technical school in Bemidji, MN. A large part of my volunteering is with the Albert Lea Anglers. This is a jr. high and high school aged fishing team I started 5 years ago and we now have 80 kids on the team. Oh, did I mention that I don't fish or know anything about fishing?

I also volunteer at church, I'm on the CVB board, Riverland Community College Foundation, Albert Lea Lakes Foundation, Marion Ross Statue Committee and yes, I have trouble saying, "no".

Of course, my most important volunteer opportunity is with MFCP. The MFCP board will be headed into Strategic Planning in February. If you have any items that you would like us to discuss or possible goals to add to the plan, please contact me at julia.thompson@freeborncountyshopper.com

Input from the group is invaluable in making our long-term goals successful. Lee has been doing a fantastic job of steering the organization to a sustainable future and we are feeling positive about the upcoming year. I'm looking forward to a prosperous 2022 for MFCP and its members.

Julia Thompson

From the office



It's Almost Spring Conference Time! *...and we've got a game plan for success!*

Lee Borkowski

2021 is behind us and we now turn our sights to 2022 and the many successes that await us. The conference committee has been working for months to plan a stellar Spring Conference.

As an added bonus to the Spring Conference we will host a Circulation Summit on Thursday, March 3rd from 2:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. We've arranged to have a panel of experts in the field on hand to cover all things circulation. No matter your mode of distribution – carrier, mail or rack – this is a session you are not going to want to miss! Bring your questions and join us as we discuss all things circulation.

The actual 2022 Spring conference is designed to help you achieve 2022 goals. It will be held at the Gateway Hotel and Conference Center on Friday, March 4th. The program kicks off at 8:00 AM with breakfast and a keynote speech by Ryan Dohrn.

Click here to watch a short clip from Ryan. <https://youtu.be/8RJD1VZG8mA>

The entire day will be devoted to helping your sales, management and graphics teams learn and grow. Ryan Dohrn will lead the sales track while Russell Viers will head up the graphics. In addition to the training we will also have many vendors on hand. Be sure to visit with them to learn about their products and services.

We'll round out the conference with a 3-minute Idea Fair and the announcement of the 2021 Ad Contest award winners. Speaking of the Ad Contest....you can pull your entries now and send them anytime to the MFCP office. You'll find a complete set of rules for this year's conference here. [2021 Contest Rules.](#)

The board and I hope you will join us in Ames where you're sure to learn some new plays to ensure your team's success!

See you there!

Lee

p.s. In keeping with the Game Day theme all attendees are encouraged to wear their favorite game gear.

Member News

New Year – New Rates?

As we launch into 2022 we're asking that you take a minute to update your contact and rate information for our database. We use the database for a number of things to keep the organization running smoothly. We need your help in keeping the data current.

We're hoping you can help us out. Simply follow these 2 steps:

- You start the process by accessing the [current membership directory here](#).
- Next, you'll need to review the information for your publication(s), make any corrections and forward the updates to director@mfc.org.

If you don't need any changes, please just send a quick email letting us know the name of the publication(s) that is correct.

We'll take care of updating everything in the system and the Membership Directory.

Welcome to our two newest Associate Members!!!

Merrimac Plus is a software company located in Concord, Maine. They provide Merrimac Publishing Manager, a comprehensive program for publishers to keep track of their businesses in one place. Their program is a perfect fit for free and paid papers; affordable for startups, yet flexible enough to grow with a company's needs. One package manages everything from administration of Classified and Display Advertising, Newsstand, Delivery, Direct Mail, Accounting and Payroll.

Publication Printers, a full-service web printing company located in Denver, Colorado, is family-owned and operated since 1979. Their services include printing, binding, distribution, and digital solutions. They pride themselves on being the first commercial printer to use green initiatives such as PrintReleaf, designed to reduce the carbon footprint. Using vegetable-based inks and paper with recycled content, they can even provide biodegradable stretch film for pallets.

MVP'S At Work

Setting the Tone for the New Year

By Kari Jurens

Why are we so much more willing to give to others during the holiday season? Why are we in a much better mood? Maybe it's because of the time we spend with our families and friends. Or, could it be all the amazing food we eat? Regardless, the magic of the holidays is undeniable.

In our call, we discussed everything from what our favorite holiday movie is to traditions we look forward to each year. From the Grinch to Charlie Brown Christmas and decorating the outside with lights or inviting neighbors to our holiday meal, happiness is everywhere this time of the year. Tiffany discussed how she is sharing holiday traditions with her children while Amanda is excited to spend time with her grandparents. Carrie is excited to go to her fiance's family for a couple of days and just relax.

We also discussed how the upcoming conference is rapidly approaching. Some fundraising ideas were discussed and will be brought to the board for more guidance on what is allowed or available. Our meeting may have been short but the conversations were priceless. The connections this group makes each time we meet is something to cherish. For those who are nominated down the road, I highly suggest you take advantage of this amazing opportunity. The single meeting a month helps to refresh and rejuvenate each of us in our own ways even if we are hundreds of miles apart.

May you always remember your worth to your community and the importance of what you do each and every day is to them. Here is to a new year and making memories that will last a lifetime.

Kevin Slimp



Free Training Grants

“Plus” Avoiding & Fixing Dead Hard Drive Crises

*Cost
of Buying a Home*

Kevin Slimp
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In a couple of recent columns, I touched on two topics that greatly affected my work in the last few days of 2021. They were so significant that I decided to write in more detail about both issues to kick off this first column written in 2022.

Free Training for Your Staff

In my end-of-year column last month, I mentioned that newspapers are uniquely positioned to utilize government grants to pay for on-site training. I first became aware of this when Joel Washburn invited me to visit his paper for a day in McKenzie, Tennessee, to offer training for his entire staff a few years ago. While there, he shared that the state of Tennessee was funding my visit through a small business grant.

Since then, I’ve worked with papers in several states that have received grants to pay the entire bill for my services to offer on-site training. These grants covered the training and costs related to travel and any other expenses.

A few months ago, I assisted a weekly newspaper in another state in creating a report to be submitted to their state in hopes of acquiring a significant grant that would pay all costs related to on-site training for their staff in spring 2022. What a great Christmas present I received when I heard from the publisher of that paper to let me know the state approved the grant, and I’ll be heading to their location for several days this spring. Their grant will cover all expenses for travel and training while I’m on-site, plus six months of monthly online training and consulting for their staff afterward. Yes, it was a significant “chunk of change,” but I wasn’t surprised to learn it had been approved.

Having been involved in helping several newspapers receive grants, I’ve learned a few things that are important when applying to states for funds:

It helps if your newspaper is locally owned. Most of the small business grants I’ve helped newspapers acquire were designated for locally owned small businesses offering training for their staff.

It helps if the training benefits every person on staff. If I remember correctly, every time I’ve worked on-site with a grant recipient, it was to work with every staff person, including reporters, designers, editors, publishers, circulation staff, ad reps, and anyone else on the payroll. Granting organizations tend to fund groups that will most benefit from training.

It helps to ask for larger grants. It may seem like it would be easier to get a smaller grant than a larger one, but that’s often not the case. I’ve served on boards of several granting organizations over the years and know first-hand that it’s easier to give out money in large chunks than in smaller amounts. This spring, the group I’ll be visiting requested the maximum grant offered and was successful.

It helps to have a local contact, even though grants might be offered by the state. There’s probably someone in your county government who works directly with small businesses. That’s an excellent place to begin.

Here’s my advice concerning grants for staff training. Contact the person in your county who deals with small businesses. Ask if they can provide information concerning grants provided by the state (or county) for small business training.

Lesson Learned Concerning Backup Drives

A couple of months ago, I wrote a column referring to the multiple backup drives on my desk, in addition to the off-site backup I utilize. I mentioned that I keep several drives to back up the computer (and each other), so I won't lose crucial files in the event of a drive failure. Drive failures are not only a possibility but are likely. A few years ago, a hard drive manufacturer informed me that the average life of a drive was less than three years, so it's essential to plan for drive failure.

During the last week of 2021, two of my backup drives failed within a day of each other. Coincidence? Possibly. Perhaps there was a power surge or something along the network that caused the drives to quit working, but whatever the case, they were dead.

I tried several utilities to revive the drives but found only one that worked well for me. It's called Disk Drill, from 508 Software (cleverfiles.com).

With Disk Drill, I gathered most of the files from the biggest backup drive (4 TB of information) and copied them to another (new) drive. It took about 48 hours for Disk Drill to do its work, then another six hours for me to go through the files and copy them to another drive. Because this was my second oldest backup drive, there were files on it that hadn't been backed up to other drives, and I couldn't afford to lose them.

I learned a couple of lessons. One was to make sure everything was backed up in at least three places. I thought I was doing that but learned some of the files pre-dated the backup routines I had set up. The second lesson was to be sure the off-site backup (I use Backblaze) is backing up not just the hard drive and network but the external backup drives as well.

I purchased two new drives. I spent a little extra and purchased solid-state (SSD) drives this time. They have a much longer lifespan than traditional USB drives and are less prone to break due to movement, shaking, etc. One is a 5-terabyte drive and the other a 2-terabyte drive. The larger drive backs up everything on both the computer and other external drives, while the 2-terabyte drive is used exclusively for Apple Time Machine, which backs up everything on my computer every few hours.

It wasn't an inexpensive lesson, but one well worth learning.

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



Catch More Customers For Your Advertisers

John Foust, Raleigh, NC

My friends Mark and Sandy invited me to spend a couple of days in a vacation beach condo they had rented, about a month before their first child was born. Mark and I decided to do some fishing, so we bought some shrimp to use as bait and waded into the ocean, which was unusually calm and flat that day.

We stood there for several hours in waist-high water. Mark knew a lot more about fishing than I did, but neither of us caught a fish. He may have had a nibble or two, but I ended up with nothing but a bad case of sunburn. When we sloshed our way back to the shore, I still had my original shrimp on my hook. Mark told me that even though the fish weren't biting that day, my odds would have improved if I had kept fresh bait on the hook.

It was a little embarrassing, because I should have known better. If I were a fish, I certainly wouldn't be interested in a shrimp that had been hanging around that long.

That lesson applies to advertising, as well as fishing. It pays to make a fresh offer to your target audience.

Imagine how your newspaper might deal with the problem of long-time advertisers who run the same ads in every issue. They are loyal to the paper, but it doesn't help them at all to let their ads get stale. It's the advertising version of Groundhog Day, without the classic Sonny and Cher alarm clock song.

Let's say that one of those advertisers is a hardware store which has been running the same small ad for several years. The headline simply reads, "Big discounts on hardware." There is no illustration, just a logo and contact information at the bottom. To remedy the staleness, the account rep could suggest a series of ads, with each one featuring an offer on a specific product. This creates an opportunity for seasonal offers. In the Spring, a sequence of ads could feature a lawnmower and various gardening tools. In the Fall, there could be a leaf blower. Since each ad spotlights one product, an illustration would be a natural fit. And along the way, there is a possibility of co-op money from individual manufacturers. That would increase the hardware store's budget, which would allow them to run larger ads.

Or how about the vacuum cleaner store which runs the same small ad with a generic headline in issue after issue? You could use the technique here, too. Just create a series featuring an offer on one type of vacuum in each ad. The cumulative message would be what the advertiser intends – “we’re your local source for vacuum cleaners” – but the delivery would be more effective.

Everybody wins. Advertisers get more business. Readers learn about good deals. Manufacturers benefit from the publicity. And your paper creates happier advertisers and better looking pages.

It all adds up to quite a catch, doesn’t it?

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

Bob Berting



A Spoof About Bad Time Management Habits

Bob Berting,
Berting Communications

Many salespeople are not well organized because they don't have a good personal time management system. The following is intended to be a spoof about time management.

The early morning--striking the right image:

If the salesperson is new and the starting time is 8:00 am, he will get to the office at **7:30**. The salesperson does not know why he is there at 7:30 but he wants to look eager. **Next, he will cruise the office and plant, always walking very fast so everyone will see him and recognize he has arrived early for work.** Then it's back to the sales area, time for a cup of coffee, discussion of last night's TV programs, and a phone call to the lottery hot line.

Starting the morning calls:

At around 10:00, the salesperson gets into his car and now begins his time management for the day. With 500 accounts in a 10 mile radius, the salesperson thinks "I wonder where I'll go today?" The first call on any day has to be to someone who is friendly, with a preference for someone who has coffee or very close to a coffee shop. Sunny days are good for a half hour trip to Harvey's Hardware store. Harvey is happy to see him because Harvey is lonely. The salesperson could easily spend an hour with Harvey and justify it by saying it's account development. After all, Harvey does run 10" ads occasionally and he wants to be right there when Harvey is ready to increase his ad size.

Lunch time

At 12:00 noon the salespeople return to the office, then out to lunch together and begin "market research." The newest salesperson always has everything figured out the first week. If the paper is a broad sheet format, it should be a tabloid. If the paper is mail-delivered, it should be carrier-delivered. They then commiserate together—the economy is weak, people are not spending, business is down, and the radio station is cutting its rates again.

Afternoon selling time

Back to the office from lunch, followed by paper shuffling and a few phone calls...and finally about 2:00, the salesperson is back out on the street for his selling activity. The salesperson knows something is wrong because the merchants are not running out of their stores and throwing advertising copy into his car. The salesperson never thinks, "Well, the publication has been in business for 20 years—maybe they're doing something right." The new salesperson cannot understand the merchants' sales resistance.

Late afternoon wind down

The salesperson wants to be back in the office by 4:00, to insure he can leave promptly by 5:00. He quickly submits his copy to the layout department and tells them he'll look at the finished production ads in the morning.

This pattern of wasting time means that once bad habits are formed, the salesperson will continue to waste time, day in and day out. But when a salesperson makes good sales calls on a regular basis, increased sales will result.

However to do this, he must have an effective time management system, demonstrate self-discipline, and have an organized work plan.

Bob Berting's new e-book #4 for advertising salespeople

Bob is the author of 4 best-selling e-books for the newspaper industry Bob's newest e-book "**Smart Customer Connections For Advertising Salespeople**" is a publication that is very relative and helpful for print media salespeople dealing with their customers in today's CoronaVirus atmosphere. You can order any of Bob's books on his website: www.bobberting.com.

Read Bob's e-books and discover how his vast experience and know-how can help you achieve much more business for you and your publication. You'll greatly benefit from the wisdom of one of America's top advertising sales experts.

Bob is a professional speaker, advertising sales trainer, publisher marketing consultant, and leading columnist in many national and regional newspaper trade association publications. He is the President of Berting Communications and can be reached at bob@bobberting.com or 317-849-5408.

Ryan Dohrn



Are You A One-Trick Sales Pony?

Explaining and selling the marketing triangle of success

Ryan Dohrn

The idiom one-trick pony is derived from the circus. A circus featuring a pony that has only been trained to perform one trick and often is not very entertaining. Unfortunately, that is how we are often seen in the media business. All too often advertisers see us as being good for only one thing, bringing them new business. While this is an important part of what we do, it is not the only thing that we do. It is critical as media sales professionals that we recognize this is a problem and we deal with it head-on. Whether in prospecting or hosting meetings, I always am talking with potential and current advertisers about the marketing triangle of success. If I could be so bold, I would like to lay claim to that phrase here in E&P. I believe that an educated Advertiser will always buy more media for me. When I am teaching my ad sales training workshops I tell media sales pro's like all of you, that you need to think more like a teacher than a salesperson. What am I teaching? The marketing triangle of success.

The marketing triangle of success has three sides. This is a formula that has been followed for years by larger, more sophisticated companies. But, if we teach it to our clients, I believe they will spend more money with us. On the bottom of the marketing triangle is new business development. On one of the other angles of the triangle, is re-engagement with past customers. On the other side of the triangle, is retaining customers. All three of these components of the marketing triangle of success are things that we can help an Advertiser control. But, if we don't explain this to them, they truly will not understand why this is important. The triangle is actually the strongest geometric shape.

When engineers build structures, they want to make sure that the structure can bear weight. In other words, they do not want the structure to fall down when a force is applied to it. For example, bridges must be able to hold up the materials that make the bridge, as well as all of the traffic traveling across it. That is why you see many bridges built out of series of connected triangles. When a force, the load, is applied to one of the corners of a triangle, it is distributed down each side. That is why it's a great shape to use in describing how we can be helpful to our clients via their advertising. Let's break down each side of the triangle.

On the base of the triangle and in every graphical representation that you create, should be new business development. It is foundational. All advertisers want new business coming through the door. That new business comes in various shapes and sizes, but we impact it none the less. But, if we don't explain the other sides of the triangle we are seen as the proverbial one-trick pony. New business development is top of mind and foremost to every Advertiser. When we talk about new business development, I also talk about managing expectations. I like to ask questions like, "What does one new customer mean to you?" Or, I like the question "If we could help you bring in even one new customer what would that mean to you?" Or, "When this ad campaign runs perfectly what type of results would you be looking for?" All these questions lead to managing expectations and setting up your Advertiser for success. Not asking these questions will put an unfair expectation on you as the media company. Please keep in mind that as much as I love my advertisers, most of them, they are some of the most unrealistic individuals that we will deal with. They literally feel that they can spend \$500 with us and they will get \$500,000 in return. That's okay. We know this. So, we should be prepared to work with it. Explaining the foundational base of the marketing triangle of success is important but you have to marry that with the management of customer expectations as well.

New business is the base of the triangle, but one of the other sides of the triangle is customer engagement. It's important for us to explain to an Advertiser that re-engaging with past customers is a mathematically positive equation that they should dedicate some marketing dollars to in order to maximize the return on investment from the total marketing plan. Experts tell us that you are 60% to 70% more likely to re-sign or re-engage with a past customer. This applies to your Advertiser and it applies to you as a media sales professional as well. Yet, most business owners and companies do not dedicate any budget to re-engagement or renewal of previous customers. When the focus is always on new business development, experts tell us that you were only about ten to fifteen percent likely to close a new account. So, knowing these mathematical statistics, it would only make sense for The Advertiser to focus a little bit of the budget on re-engaging or renewing past customers of theirs. Very rarely do I come across an advertiser that does not want to re-engage with past customers. But, they are so focused on new business development, an important part of the marketing triangle, that they often forget to dedicate any budget to re-engaging former customers. If we don't point it out, we'll never get money for it. A lot of what I try to teach my media sales training and coaching clients is that we need to think like a teacher and not so much like a salesperson. Explain it to sell it.

The other side of the triangle, still very important, is customer retention. This should be important to you as a sales professional and it should be important to all business owners and companies out there. Yet, again, I see very infrequently, budgets dedicated to retention or thanking their customers. This is a conversation that many people would frame as a "branding". Just the nature of the word itself branding often means to an Advertiser that they will run an ad with us and not expect any results. That is why I have changed how I speak about branding. I have now begun speaking in terms of "brand maintenance". I'm not trying to play semantics here with you. Brand maintenance and branding are the same thing. But, what I've noticed, is when I throw the word maintenance into the word sequence there is an implied value that is received. When you maintain your vehicle or perform vehicle maintenance you're receiving something for the price that you pay. It's a subtle and small change but something that can be pretty darn dramatic. Again, if we do not explain this side of the marketing triangle of success, how can we expect to get paid for it? We can't. Each side of the triangle is important. I will say to the advertiser, "You have spent thousands of dollars getting your business to where it is today. How about we dedicate some marketing dollars to protecting your turf and protecting your brand? Let's look at some brand maintenance activities."

The marketing triangle of success is only as good as your ability to explain it. Because every sales professional hates role-playing, it's important for us to figure out the best way to present this concept. It's also important for us to have good success stories and examples of other advertisers that truly do follow the marketing triangle of success. In my opinion, the only way to effectively do this is with a nice graphical presentation. Experts tell us that over 70% of what you learn is taken into your brain through your eyes. That's why I like to include a slide that shows the marketing triangle of success in every presentation. I like to walk my advertisers through what it looks like and speak about each side of the triangle. Many times I'll do this by drawing on a piece of paper or having some type of graphical representation in my slide deck. If I'm face to-face I prefer to draw it on a piece of paper. This allows me to create better engagement with the advertiser. And, in addition, to this show and tell, I can also further draw on each side of the triangle as we talk about budget allocation.

Being a one-trick pony does mean that you do at least have one trick. I suppose that is always a place to start. But expanding this conversation will help you get more advertising dollars. As I said previously, I truly do believe, that an educated Advertiser, will spend more money with you. Once you wrap your mind around this concept you will begin to get out of sales mode and move more into educator mode. A study a few years ago by the consulting company SAP told us that 89% of buyers would rather go to the dentist than talk to a salesperson. You've heard me talk about this on my As Sales Nation podcast many times. If this is indeed true, this is a bit scary for all of us. So, that's why I feel that the epitome of consultative selling is explaining the marketing triangle of success. Never forget friends, and I say this all the time, if media sales was easy everybody be doing it. And they are not. We are the chosen few. We have found a career that will feed our families for a lifetime!

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*.

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