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December 2021



President's Corner



It is already the end of the year!

Lisa Miller

I was recently listening to an Amy Grant song, "I Need a Silent Night." These lyrics stuck with me:

*December comes then disappears
Faster and faster every year
Did my own mother keep this pace
Or was the world a different place?*

Here we are already starting the week of December 6. I am not sure where November went, but I am positive December will go by even faster.

The holidays are different for each and every person and knowing that, we should realize the holidays are different for each and every one of our readers and advertisers. Do you take a moment during the holidays to remember them?

Visual reminders of the upcoming holidays are starting to show up in my office. Some meat and cheese trays and the occasional chocolates are being dropped off. These thoughtful gifts make me pause and think about who we do business with each and every week. Have you taken the time to stop at any of your clients' place of business to thank them personally for their business or even wish them a happy holiday? I'm not talking about an email or phone call, but actually going there and speaking to them. Or is that become something of the past?

The world of publishing is a different place. We are at a pace that is faster and faster every year. Have we forgotten to slow down enough to be grateful? I will be one of the first to say, "send me an email. It is the best way to get ahold of me". I know then that I can address it when I sit down and, more importantly, I won't forget to do it! Do we have so many emails coming in and going out that we have lost the personal touch?

Remote working is no longer something to be discouraged. In fact, I bet almost every one of you reading this has worked outside of your office. Whether it is putting obits onto your website from a hotel room or taking a phone call on your cell from a client, technology has changed our business. In fact, publishers have encouraged employees to take technology with them. With portable technology, we have been able to do more and more with less and less.

Even though we are in high gear every day, don't forget why we do what we do. Don't forget those who help you do what you do. Most importantly remember the reason you do what you do. Each client, each reader, and each publication deserve your time. This is the perfect time to thank those who stand by you and your publication each and every day. Last time I looked, saying thank you or wishing someone Merry Christmas didn't cost anything but your time. Slow down enough to be thankful this season.

Thank you for taking the time to read my column. It has been a great 2021. I know 2022 is going to start off amazing with Julia Thompson taking over as president. MFCP is an outstanding organization that strives to help each and every member. I am thankful to be one of those members. I hope all of you have a safe and joyous holiday season. Merry Christmas!

Reminder to save these dates: Cabin Fever Cash starts in January. MFCP Spring Conference, Ames, IA, March 3-4.

From the office



Looking Ahead to 2022 MFCP-Style

As 2021 draws to a close, we turn our attention to 2022 and one of our primary goals of finding ways that we can help your publications be more successful.

One such way is to participate in the **Cabin Fever 2022 promotion**. This promo will run the full month of January and is structured to work for both weekly and monthly publications. MFCP is awarding cash prizes that total \$1,500. Money that will be spent locally...in your market... if you have a winner.

We ran this very successful promotion last year. Greg Birkett shared that he had advertisers who ran with him every week in January who likely would not have been in his paper without the contest. He went on to share that he added in excess of \$3,000 to his bottom line. Certainly, a great way to start out the year!

For those that are not familiar with how the program works, or would like a refresher, I've set up two Zoom calls. Choose the one that best fits your schedule and join me as I walk you through the program and how it can help you make more money in 2022! The calls are set for December 14th at 11AM and December 16th at 9AM. Login info for the Zoom call can be found here:

Lee Borkowski is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: MFCP MASTER ZOOM LINE -

Time: This is a recurring meeting Meet anytime

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89536727860?pwd=bjVzTlpKWl84b1dwTXdjbE4vb05lQT09>

Meeting ID: 895 3672 7860

Passcode: 626106

One tap mobile

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+13017158592,,89536727860#,,, *626106# US (Washington DC)

Dial by your location

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

Meeting ID: 895 3672 7860

Passcode: 626106

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kdwbUKfpaC>

If neither of those times works for you, please let me know as I'm happy to schedule a separate call for you.

Another way to ensure your success in 2022 is to attend the conference March 4th in Ames, Iowa. We will have a full day of programming featuring Ryan Dohrn (sales) and Russell Viers (graphics). As a bonus we will also have a circulation summit Thursday, March 3rd in the afternoon. During that time, we intend to have a panel of folks talk about all-things circulation. 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 contest here.](#)

Member News

MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS –

MARIJUANA DISPENSARY ADVERTISING - We had a call last week from a publisher who wanted to know our opinion of accepting marijuana dispensary advertising from a client. Their situation is a bit more complex as they distribute in two states – and marijuana is only legal in one of the two. Their paper is entirely mailed. It's my understanding that the post office can refuse to deliver your paper if it contains this type of ad as marijuana is not legal at the federal level. The bottom line is this- the publisher is going to have to decide if it is worth the risk. What are your thoughts? Have you accepted such ads and distributed your paper using the USPS? Please let me know. I'll share a synopsis of the comments received with all of you next month.

director@mfcg.org

ARE YOU LOOKING TO ADD TO YOUR RACK COUNTS? We have a past member that is looking to sell their racks. They have racks that are suitable for interior and also some suitable for exterior use. Contact the Sioux Falls Shopper for more info. They can be reached at 605-940-4914.

MVP'S AT WORK

Workplace Advice

By Amanda Hoefler

Happy December everyone!

During our November meeting, we discussed the different pieces of advice that we have been given from mentors and peers over the years. We talked about how easily one can become overwhelmed when trying to do too many things at once, so it is easier to prioritize. And we discussed the importance of being aware of what your customers might want ahead of time, so you can anticipate their needs, and be ready for changes. Being a leader and not a follower, helps your publication stand out from others when it comes to changes.

Additionally, we discussed management strategies within the workplace. For the MVP's we found that we like a balance of micro-managing and macro-managing. Micro-managing can make an employee feel untrusted, incapable, or even impede the progress they would make on their own. On the other hand, a lack of management can make an employee feel lost and unsure that they are meeting their managers' expectations, particularly when starting out.

Lastly, we began discussing fundraising ideas for the MFCP conference in March! We are very excited to reconnect with each other in person as well as see all of you there! Thankyou and Happy Holidays!

Kevin Slimp



New Year Advice

Advice to newspapers as we enter 2022

or buying a home

Kevin Slimp
kevin@kevinslimp.co

After so many years of consulting and advising newspapers, it still never ceases to surprise me when I find questions from publishers in my email. Still, when I click on Apple Mail, there are questions concerning circulation, design, business practices, and more.

As we begin a new year, let me share some of my best advice that might just improve your business in 2022:

Put serious effort into growing readership

Two months ago, I wrote a column that included ideas from Tony Cox, a publisher in Tennessee. Tony's newspaper in Clinton, Tennessee, has been growing, in both readership and advertising revenue, in no small part because the staff puts serious effort into growing circulation. Tony mentioned that a redesign three years ago seemed to "kickstart" a season of growth.

Get training for your staff, and get free on-site training

I still do a lot of online consulting and training, but I don't do nearly as much on-site consulting and training as I did a few years ago. The reason is apparent: the ability to get training online cuts the expenses involved significantly. With no travel, hotels, and rental cars, the cost of a day or two of training is a lot more affordable than it used to be.

Still, I get requests to visit newspapers for two or three days to provide on-site training. And lately, I'm finding that a good bit of this training is being underwritten by state grants. In several states where I've worked over the past couple of years, the entire bill, including my travel, hotel, and training fee, was paid for by a grant from the state.

Many states, maybe most, offer grants to locally owned businesses providing training for their staffs by "experts." It seems grants often require the business to be locally owned and operated, that training is provided for all staff members, and that the training benefits the business in the future.

I would suggest contacting your state Small Business Administration to learn what is available in your area.

Redesign to keep your readers interested

When I visit with non-newspaper readers, and sometimes even people in the newspaper business, they are surprised there are newspapers growing in readership and advertising. One factor that correlates among most growing papers I hear from is design. Most papers I've run into who are growing redesign their pages every five to seven years.

Do not believe that print is dying

Most of my income comes from a book publishing business I began four years ago. This year, we've published about a dozen best sellers among the 30 or so titles our company has released in 2021. I'm not sure why people are so surprised when they ask how much of our book sales come from digital books. Even though most of our books are available in Kindle and other digital formats, the income derived from digital books sales is less than 5 percent. Book publishers know that the number of sales via digital and audiobooks is tiny compared to printed books. Don't let anyone convince you that people have quit reading print.

Experiment with color

It's easy to fall back on old habits, and updating colors used in ads and on pages is vital in keeping readers interested. Stay abreast of the latest in color by checking out the most popular colors at pantone.com or by keeping an eye on what national advertisers are doing with color. You'll notice that clothing, paint, carpet, cars, and just about everything else correlate with the colors Pantone reports are most popular each year.

Update your hardware regularly

Last month, I wrote about the difference adding more large monitors made in my design efforts. Even so, I still seem to replace my monitors about once a year with bigger, higher-resolution monitors. I update my computers about every other year—the payback: increased speed and output. And let's face it, time is money.

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.

Ad-Libs



The Advertising Sales Circle

John Foust, Raleigh, NC

Let's take a look at the sales cycle. For our purposes, the focus is on advertising media sales, but this concept can apply to any business. Although the cycle has a beginning and an end, the end leads to a new beginning.

We'll limit our 30,000-foot view to four steps, each of which could feature multiple sub-categories. Start by imagining a circle which is divided into four quadrants. Quadrant 1 is located in the top right, and we move clockwise to Quadrants 2, 3 and 4.

Here's how it works:

1. Sale. For simplicity's sake, Quadrant 1 represents everything in the sales process, including: identifying prospects, pre-meeting research, appointments, presentation techniques, discovery questions, initial and follow-up contact, answering objections, and closing or advancing the sale.

2. Delivery. After the sale is made, it's time to deliver what has been sold. Quadrant 2 contains everything in the ad creation and production process: creative strategy, ad tactics, target audiences, copywriting, and ad design.

3. Outcome. Results are in Quadrant 3. Are the ads working? Or more to the point, are the ads meeting or exceeding the advertiser's expectations? If the answer is "yes," you're on solid ground. If the answer is "no," there is some work to be done to change the outcome.

It's all about expectations. If the client is running image ads, it's difficult to measure results, because that would require relying on public perceptions, and perhaps market research or focus groups.

Response ads are easier to measure. A specific promotion either works or it doesn't. A clearance sale either generates revenue or it doesn't.

4. Judgment. Quadrant 4 represents the verdict, the conclusion that resides in the client's mind. Just think of the old movies that show a Roman emperor giving a thumbs-up or a thumbs-down sign at a gladiator contest.

If the outcome of the advertising is perceived as positive or promising, the judgment will be thumbs-up. But if the outcome is seen as negative, they'll give it a thumbs down.

We see this process as a cycle, because the judgment step leads back to the sales quadrant. A thumbs-up judgment means the next sale will be easier, because the advertiser is pleased with the outcome. Thumbs-down means the next sale will be much more difficult – with big resistance to overcome. He or she thinks, “The ads didn’t work, so why in the world should I spend my hard-earned money to run more ads in that paper?”

You see, when it comes to judging the effectiveness of an advertising campaign, clients usually base their decisions on what happens when the ads run, not on what they were told in the beginning of the process. Results speak louder than words.

The bottom line is that making a sale is just the first step. When the ads start running, it’s all about delivering positive outcomes, which lead to positive judgments. Those positive judgments can easily lead to more sales – and loyal, long-term advertisers.

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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



7 Reasons Why Advertising Salespeople Irritate Their Customers

Bob Berting,
Berting Communications

At most of my newspaper customer seminars, I hear various comments from some of the attendees about their negative relationships with advertising salespeople from their local paper. Here are 7 of the most talked about comments:

1. Being too aggressive and pushy

Sometimes, there is a fine line between being excited and enthusiastic about the publication—and being aggressive and pushy. Advertising prospects are sensitive to this approach.

Advertising salespeople should be trained to understand good human relations, recognizing that most selling is based upon it. All the sales training programs in the world won't help if salespeople don't understand what I call "First Brain Communication", which stresses emotional connection over hard sell logic. One example is to show your creative spec layouts for a campaign and get the prospect's ego emotionally involved in the process, before discussing any facts and figures.

Even today, I'm still surprised at salespeople who push logic with facts and figures before getting the prospect emotionally involved in the layout presentation.

2. Wasting too much time

Failure to keep appointments, providing unnecessary information, taking too long to get to the point, and failure to ask for the order, are some of the time wasting situations that irritate many advertisers in their relations with advertising salespeople.

3. Running down competitor publications

Though salespeople must be knowledgeable about their competition, they many times irritate their customers if they use that information to down them. Sometimes faced with the objection about a competitors lower rate, a simple "they know the value of their services" will suffice. Then proceed to show why you can give them more value with your services and your rates.

4. Talking too much

A classic complaint is that salespeople ramble on and on about unnecessary detail.

Salespeople must know when to stop, listen, and be prepared to ask for the order. This is perhaps one of the biggest problems in communicating while selling.

solve a problem. A good closing comment might be "I'm here to solve your marketing problems, not just spend your money".

5. Attitude of indifference after the sales is made

After a campaign is planned and the contract is signed, the salesperson has to maintain the same level of helpfulness and caring that he or she made before the sale. Indifference can create a negative relationship and can be a real word of mouth problem for the salesperson in the future.

6. Poor presentation

When I go out with salespeople in a coaching capacity, I am sometimes appalled at their presentation strategy. Many merchant prospects have complained that salespeople show features, but seldom demonstrate how their product will benefit the buyer's business or help solve a problem. A good closing comment might be "I'm here to solve your marketing problems, not just spend your money".

7. Dressing inappropriately

Though there is a trend toward informality, this should not be taken for granted. A merchant recently commented that the initial meeting may decide whether they want to see a salesperson again and the wearing apparel of the salesperson was a major factor in that decision. Wrinkled clothing, poor color selection, and out of date clothing style can damage a good relationship with a prospect.

Finally, there is a likeability factor in selling. Selling yourself can be very true.

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



Selling New Digital Marketing Options With Success

8 ideas to boost your chances of getting a signed advertiser contract

Around every corner is a new digital media marketing option. OTT, audio/podcasting, CCT, video, and more. These new marketing technology (MarTech) ideas are awesome, but as salespeople, we often have new marketing solutions dropped on us and we are expected to work our “sales magic.” Sure, there is a dream out there that we as sales pros would be involved in the total process of new media launches. But, let’s just live with the reality that leadership normally does not involve us in the origination of new marketing tools. It’s ok. To all the leaders out there, we recognize this as a fact and would love to be involved from the beginning. To my fellow media sales warriors, perhaps if we were not so negative about new ideas, we would be asked to be involved from day one. Just a thought.

So, you have been dealt a new media option like video or podcasting, how do we sell it quickly and effectively? I encourage you to consider these eight ideas for selling new media marketing options with success.

1. Sell with visuals. Bradford Research tells us that 65% of people are visual learners. Yet, I observe that most media reps are phone- or auditory-based sellers. Meaning, we talk to tell. We do not show to tell. If COVID brought us anything good, it is the fact that almost everyone can participate in a Zoom meeting. Selling new technology requires visuals or, you are connecting with less than 35% of people in an optimal way.

2. Stop designing sales tools for eighth-graders. It has been a common practice to design sales tools in such a simple way that even an eighth-grader can understand them. Have you met today’s middle school students? They can out tech most adults. When selling new marketing ideas like video or audio, take the idea and create sales tools to explain to your Mom. Love you, Mom. I truly mean this. Try to remove as much tech lingo as you can from the explanation and focus on the value that the new marketing options bring to the advertiser. Podcasting is great for thought leadership or education. Video is great for showcasing customer testimonials to drive new business. Video is also a great way to aid in social media advertising impact. Facebook tells us that video posts are viewed 30 times more than non-video posts. Never forget, in media sales, price is what an advertiser pays. The value is the benefit they receive from you. So, everything should be focused on value and/or benefit.

3. As a sales strategy, try playing the “I have a new idea” game with your advertisers. This is a fun game that I use to sell new marketing ideas. The email looks something like this ... “Hi, Bonnie. I have a new idea that I think you will really like. Could I have five minutes to share? I would like to share this with you first before offering it to others. Would Tuesday or Wednesday after 2 p.m. work for a quick chat?” Do NOT explain the option in an email. Do NOT attach a sales sheet. Do NOT try and explain the new MarTech over the phone.

4. I love to sell new MarTech ideas based on F.O.M.O. The fear of missing out (FOMO) is real. Most people do not like to be left out when things are new. I will drive this fear home with an email that looks something like this ... “Hi, Bill. I have an idea that would be perfect for you. Before sharing this idea with Jane Doe Realtor, Bob Doe Insurance, or Rex Reed Jewelers, I want to share it with you first. If you are not interested, let me know and I will move on to Jane. Thanks so much.” While we must be ethical in all we do in sales, we can also be point-blank, and this technique has sold a lot for me over the years. Just to be clear, though, you cannot use this technique more than once in most cases.

5. Sell based on perceived exclusivity. The word “perceived” is important here. I am not offering exclusivity, but I am positioning my sales pitch as a near-exclusive offer. The email might look something like, “Hi, Julie. I have a new idea and we truly only have room for two companies to be involved. I feel like your company would deeply benefit from this idea and I thought of you first. What about a quick chat after lunch today?” Clearly, an exclusive offer would be best--but that is limiting in our business. However, the illusion of near exclusivity can be an extremely powerful sales tool.

6. Play the “Could I get your advice?” game. This is similar to the “I have an idea” game. The email looks something like ... “Hi, Jill. We are launching a new marketing idea and I would really like to get your advice on how we can best present it to business owners like you. Could I drop by tomorrow after 3 p.m. for a quick chat?” Advertisers love to offer advice. This is a great idea when you want to get buy-in on new marketing options. Or, on marketing options that are not selling. This is not a bait-and-switch scenario, though. I like to approach this conversation with a very open mind. Then, I can give feedback to my leadership as well. This is an even better idea to deploy before you set pricing or invest too much in the launch of a new marketing option.

7. Go into every meeting with ideas and examples ready to go. I have been in the media sales and marketing business since 1991. Every successful sales rep I have ever worked with has never said to an advertiser, “What would you like to do with my media channel?” Instead, they have always shared ideas of how the advertiser can use the media option, idea, or channel to its fullest. Asking an advertiser to paint their own picture of potential is foolish. Lead them. Guide them. Help them be successful. You are a media sales ad-visor. So, meet in advance with your team to uncover ideas that you can present with the new media option.

8. Get your client success path squared away before you pitch a new media product. There is nothing worse than selling a new marketing option, getting the advertiser excited, and then seeing the support team or client success team drop the ball. I have seen this happen over and over in my career. So much so, that when I worked as a Group Publisher, I once refused to sell a digital marketing idea until the client success team could prove that they were ready to roll it out and truly offer white-glove service to my clients.

Fellow media sales warriors out there, in the end, it is not so much about selling a new shiny object as it is about working hard to grow your relationship with your advertisers. “Mr. or Mrs. Advertiser, my goal is simple, to be a valuable extension of your team and help your business succeed.”

Never forget, if ad sales was an easy job, everyone would be doing it. And they are not. Maybe we’re all a bit crazy, but we have found careers 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*.

<https://360adsales.com/category/ad-sales-training-blog/>

