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PAPER CLIPS



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President's Corner



Joyce Frericks

You Asked... We Answered! Navigate the USPS Website for the 3% Discount Incentive the Easy Way!

In 2005, when I started as the business manager for Simpkins Newspapers – now Star Publications – the scariest part (even scarier than sales) was circulation and the post office. I knew virtually nothing about the post office, and the few times I had to do postal reports, my sister, who worked as the previous business manager, walked me through it step-by-step on the phone. She teased me and said to be sure I got it correct or I would go to “postal prison.”

Truthfully, the post office still scares me a little bit. I may be wrong, but it is more complicated now than it was 20 years ago. Lee Borkowski, MFCP executive manager, and Peter Schultz, of Woodward Printing Services, helped alleviate some of my fears last week.

Last year Peter reached out to Lee with a question on postal programs and discounts. Together they figured out the correct approach for qualifying for and receiving a discount. Peter took it a step further and put together easy-to-follow instructions for future promotions.

Last week, Peter shared his knowledge on a MFCP publisher roundtable teleconference, “How to Qualify for the 2023 3% Discount Incentive for Marketing Mail.” Peter assembled and shared his step-by-step set of instructions for the roundtable group. I started working on it a few days later, and I’m excited to say I received an email confirming my request to participate in the program.

If you haven’t had the time to figure out the newest discount program, Lee has provided us with the following link to the Zoom recording and the step-by-step instructions.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/play/MyJSxBDRIfEE50RovDZNXGEgKSU-Yn9beBqYOQCKTVTve1hSPbifv98V1A4xP-OS0BypKJBx-5Bp5n.vfPvnwexD-b1bTMM>
Passcode: Y\$Skze7M

[Click here for step-by-step instructions](#)

If each one of MFCP’s members saves an average of \$50 per week, we will collectively save over \$125,000.

Good luck to each of you as you navigate the USPS Business Customer Gateway website, and thank you Lee and Peter for all of your help!

Joyce

From the office



Lee Borkowski

We are Here to Help You Make Money!

Wow! The year is just flying by. There are lots of things going on and many items I'd like to share with you. Let's start with the announcement of our newest promotion:

MAY DAY – PAY DAY! In this promotion MFCP will pay \$50 to anyone that sells a new ad into our MCN or 2x2 ad network. The \$50 bonus will be paid by MFCP direct to the sales rep. [Check out this link for all of the fine print!](#)

HY-VEE IS STARTING TO MAKE SOME AD BUYS... I heard from a member in Minnesota that they recently sold HY-VEE a 3-month contract for a full-page ad into two of their publications. The buy was made by their local store manager. So, if you haven't reached out in your market lately make sure you do!

POSTAL SAVINGS....3% AND THEN SOME! We held a Publishers' Roundtable last month during which Peter Schultz of Woodward Printing Services walked us through the process of qualifying for the 3% mail discount. If you missed the call, [click here for info on accessing the Zoom recording and the step-by-step directions.](#)

CONTAINERIZATION DISCOUNTS – This is something new that the post office has offered. It can amount to nearly a penny a piece and is layered on top of the 3% Marketing Mail program. It's a little confusing – but don't let that stop you! This is a weekly program and the savings add up very quickly! [Click here for more information.](#)

MANAGERS' SUMMIT July 12th-13th– We're headed to the Hotel Julien in Dubuque, Iowa July 12th and 13th for our annual Managers' Summit. Put the date on your calendar and plan to join us for a great time of networking and learning. The schedule and signup information will be sent out soon so watch your email!

DUES RENEWAL NOTICES – will be sent out soon. We appreciate your support of the association and welcome your suggestions as to things we can do better. Remember, our mission is to help you make more money!

BOARD POSITIONS – If you, or someone from your company, are interested in knowing more about serving on the MFCP Board of Directors [check out this link.](#)

HISTORY ARTICLES – We've received many positive comments about the history articles that we are sharing each month. This month we're featuring an article about Deb Weigel. [Check it out here.](#)

That's it for this month. I'm headed to the ACP conference next week and hope to come back with many ideas that will be helpful to all of you. Stay tuned!

Lee

Members Helping Members

I recently came across an editorial written by Joey Young and shared in his publication and online. I felt it was well worth the time to read and asked his permission to share it with you.

This subject and more will likely be covered at our Manager's Summit – July 12th-12th, Dubuque, Iowa.

Lee



Opinion: Post Office Increase Just One of Many New Challenges



By Joey Young, publisher

According to a release from the National Newspaper Association, the United States Postal Service is planning on increasing periodical mail another 8.8 percent in July. That hike will mean the cost to deliver your newspaper will have increased nearly 30 percent in just two years.

When you pair that with the cost of paper going up over the same timeframe, our increase at Kansas Publishing Ventures will likely be nearly 42 percent in just these two expenses.

Outside of labor, printing and mailing are our two biggest costs.

It doesn't take a mathematician to realize that things will need to change for the newspaper industry if this is an ongoing trend.

No business is set up to take 40 percent increases in its two top costs in two years and be able to weather the storm without changes.

My question to you all is how long can this go on? Do we need to start looking for real alternatives to the postal service?

I have been pretty adamant about print not dying. Most of our advertising revenue comes from our printed newspaper, and when I speak to customers, most of our readers open up the physical paper when they read our product. Our website traffic continues to grow, and we have a very popular newsletter. We are also seeing strong increases in paid subscribers consuming their news online.

But at the end of the day, most of our consumers read the printed paper.

If the printed paper costs 40 percent more than it did two years ago, can we still deliver it, even if people want it, at a cost you're willing to pay?

How many more increases are readers willing to pay for?

This situation is frustrating, because the factors we can control, such as circulation numbers, have remained steady. We actually had a small increase in circulation over the year, despite raising the cost of a subscription.

I want to hear from you, our readers. We've always worked to plan and change with the future.

Some honest feedback would be very helpful in this planning process. Based on everything I am reading about the United States Postal Service, we should expect another big increase next year, as well. Leadership has made it clear they are going to push periodical mail higher and higher for as long as they can get away with it.

So planning for the future is something we desperately have to do. Let me know. Would you happily pay more to continue to have a printed product? We know everyone's cost of living has gone up at the same time, and this is a difficult option. We aren't living as comfortably as we were before COVID-19 entered our lives, either. If it's not clear yet, the price increases we have implemented over the last three years haven't gone into our pockets but rather directly into our printer's and the postal service's.

Would you rather transition to getting your paper digitally instead of taking more increases?

If you are a reader and an advertiser, would you still advertise/support the paper differently if print circulation dipped due to cost as we transition folks to digital? To what level?

We need to have some honest conversations about how we can best change to sustainably provide intensive local news in the future. We are trying to be proactive and not reactive, but this latest postal increase certainly has me asking how we can best adapt Harvey County Now to address challenges outside our control and how we can continue to best serve the community.

We just want to hear what folks think and get some feedback, as these cost increases are far more than we ever plan for when doing our natural budgeting each year.

E-mail me at joey@kspublishingventures.com with your feedback.

Member News

CONTAINERIZATION DISCOUNT

Those of you who mail have probably noticed the “containerization discount” that recently showed up as an option on your Form 3062.

I reached out to Peter Schultz, the Mailing/Delivery Specialist for Woodward Printing Services and he shared a bit of information with me. The discount is available for folks that mail EDDM – either SCF or DDU.

NOTE: If you have any doubts about your eligibility or how to complete the forms – reach out to your local postmaster.

Here’s information that Peter shared that may be of help as you determine if you are eligible for a discount. You choose a mailing type on Form 3062 – if you chose one of the below:

NONE EDDM (F19) GETS NO DISCOUNT AT ALL

SCF EDDM (F21) GETS SCF CONTAINERIZATION DISCOUNT (F52) = .002 DISCOUNT/PIECE

DDU EDDM (F22) GETS DDU CONTAINERIZATION DISCOUNT (F47) = .009 DISCOUNT/PIECE

THE NUMBER YOU PUT IN EITHER F21 OR F22 MUST GO INTO F52 OR F47....IF THESE DO NOT MATCH YOU WILL GET AN ERROR CODE AND HAVE TO RE-ENTER IN CORRECT FIELD.

If you are mailing 10,000 pieces at the SCF EDDM rate you will receive a .002/piece discount. That equates to \$20 savings a week, \$1,040 per year. Not too bad for just clicking a box!

If you are mailing 10,000 pieces at the DDU EDDM rate you will receive a .009/piece discount. That equates to \$90 per week – or \$,4680 per year.

None of us has control over the USPS mailing rates – so it’s imperative that we take advantage of every available discount. I hope this information helps you save some money.

Again, this info is just to get you pointed in the right direction. If you need help contact your local postmaster or the mailing specialist at your printer.

Lee

Industry Pioneers

The free-paper industry has a rich history. And, many people from the Midwest played an important role in its development and growth. The caring, sharing and support members offer each other make this an industry like no other. In this section we will share features from people past and present who helped create the unusual dynamic we enjoy today.

This month our feature story is about Deb Weigel. You'll find her story and start in the business is as unique as she is! Happy reading!!

We would like to feature many more pioneers. Do you have someone in mind? If so, please reach out via email to director@mfcpc.org with the appropriate contact information. We'll take it from there!



Just Fake It!

By Deb Weigel

I guess you could say my career started back in 1973 when I was a senior in high school at Beckman in Dyersville. There was a co-op program where you could find a job, get out of school for an hour, and earn credits while working.

I worked at the Dyersville Commercial, a local newspaper that published weekly. I started out as a typesetter on a Compugraphic machine and basically just typed, typed, typed! To this day I love to just type on my computer!

I was also in charge of circulation and made all the address changes, etc. Back then I don't remember any promotions to get people to subscribe, because basically almost every household did.

Those were the days when ashtrays were all over the desks and smoke was heavy. There also might have been times when a glass of wine would be found in our top right desk drawer as well. And the days that when the paper went to press, everyone gathered at the corner bar to celebrate that another paper went out! Those were the days!

From there I traveled to Charles City to live with my older brother and sold advertising for the Charles City Press. That was short-lived as the love of my life, "Tiny", proposed to me and I moved back to Dyersville.

For the next 10 years, I took a break from the newspaper industry and worked at a high school and a LP gas company.

And then one day it happened.

A gentleman walked in and wanted to sell me an ad for the LP gas company in the Eastern Iowa Shopping News. We got to talking and I mentioned that I used to work in composition years ago while in high school. I didn't buy an ad but he returned the following week to ask me if I'd work for him. Astonished I told him I don't know anything about composition anymore and all the new technology that came with it. He said "that's ok, just fake it!"

He said he liked my personality and wanted me to be the comp manager and take over while the present manager was on vacation. Then when she returned, she would be working under me!!!! Now, what do you say to something like that????

Well, it just so happened that Tiny and I had just purchased an acreage about 3 miles outside of Edgewood where the Shopping News was located and Tiny had just taken a job in Edgewood. Sounded like an opportunity, so why not???

From the beginning, I was very honest with my employees and told them right up front I knew nothing about comp anymore and they would have to teach me. You can imagine the looks I got from them!

I have to tell you that old comp manager and her husband made my life hell for the first couple of months and I cried many nights wondering what the heck I was thinking taking this job? Thank heavens, she finally quit.

You might wonder what happened to the "just fake it" manager. Well, he got let go shortly after I arrived and they brought in a new female manager. We got along well. But after she got married and had to commute for awhile from Cedar Falls, she decided to quit because of the distance.

Well, guess who was named the next General Manager? Yup, me.

Now the Eastern Iowa Shopping News, a weekly shopper, was owned by Woodward Communications out of Dubuque. Being owned by a larger corporation surely had its benefits and the leadership at the time was second-to-none. I learned so much and made such great life-long friends. The company even financed my college education and I will be forever grateful. Gentlemen like Don Hanson, Craig Trongaard, and George Louthain all influenced me to be the best manager I could be.

It was after being the manager a couple of years, probably in the early 1990's, I started attending conferences put on by Shoppers Guides of Iowa (SGI), now Midwest Free Community Papers. These were phenomenal conferences where I met so many people in the industry who were willing to share their experiences with me. Friendships were built back then that I still have dear to my heart today.

It was after a couple of meetings that I was approached by Merle Been and Sid Blair asking me to be on the Board of SGI. I accepted and have been on the board of SGI and now MFCP ever since.

In 1999 Woodward bought the Dyersville Commercial and we closed our office in Edgewood and moved it to Dyersville. And guess what? To my surprise, there were 3 people I worked with in 1973 who were still working there!

During the early 2000's I was promoted to Vice President of the Weekly Division for Woodward and started working out of the home office in Dubuque. In 2008 I started working for Community Media Group and was publisher for the papers in Oelwein, Independence, Vinton and Waverly.

Fun fact...I ended up recruiting one of the people who was present on my first day at the Eastern Iowa Shopping News to join me years later as a member of the composition department in Oelwein. All these years later and I'm happy to say she is still a valued member of the Community Media Group award winning composition team!

I was also asked to be on the Board of the Iowa Newspaper Association and did so from 2012-2018. Retirement on June 1, 2022 is my reward for all the years of working alongside such wonderful people.

30+ years of being on the board of MFPC which will cease at the end of this year– has been an honor and privilege. This organization is one of the best things you can invest in. Please attend the conventions and make some of the best friends you will ever have, like I have done. I have been nicknamed “The Fun Factory” at these conventions and I need someone to take over that name!!! Will it be you?

MVPS At Work



Effective Communication

By Nancy Powell

Communicating effectively is an important skill, but also one that almost everyone can continue to improve upon. At our last MVP Zoom meeting we discussed ways to effectively communicate.

First, we discussed watching the tone of emails. Do not be in such a hurry that emails come off as rude, or incomplete. Give emails a quick read-through before sending. Use please and thank you when appropriate.

Second, have empathy. When going into tough meetings, clear the air with “this may be a tough topic, but we can stay calm and get through this”. Seeing both sides of an issue and staying calm will help both parties communicate with each other more effectively.

Third, be aware of the other person’s time. Actively listen and use eye contact. When visiting with a customer, do not interrupt a customer when entering an establishment. Do not talk too much or too long. Stay off your phone when visiting with your customers.

Lastly, Choose the right medium to communicate with. Know when an email is appropriate, or if an in-person talk is needed.

Keeping these couple points in mind whenever we communicate with others in the workplace can help our communication become more effective.

Kevin Slimp



Advertising Results

You think I'd have learned this lesson long ago

Kevin Slimp

It dawned on me this morning that my schedule changes significantly from day to day. There are always some things that have to get done most days. Regardless of what else is on my schedule, I spend an hour or two contacting customers and developing marketing ideas. One thing I've learned about marketing: the more time I spend on it, the more it pays off.

In addition to my other businesses, I own two businesses in the online training arena. Most of you have probably visited newspaperacademy.com at some time. I also own a company that provides online training and CECs (continuing education credits) for folks outside the newspaper world. Most people began attending webinars as a result of the recent pandemic. However, I've been leading webinars for almost 30 years. I remember when Bob DeBusk, the executive director of Tennessee Press Association, and I visited with the president of a local college to begin planning webinars using the college's satellites – this was very early in the development of the Internet – to teach classes to newspaper staffs across the globe.

After so many years leading webinars, you would think I'd know just about all there is to know about the webinar business. It wasn't until three or four years ago I noticed a significant trend. The more I advertise and promote a webinar, the more people attend.

What is it they say about doctors? Something about doctors being the worst patients.

After training newspapers for more than 30 years, owning an advertising business when I was younger, and co-leading sessions with the brightest minds in the advertising world, I should have figured this out a long time ago. I'm a slow learner.

So, what happened three or four years ago? Before then, I was always careful not to "bother" my potential customers. For instance, if I had an upcoming webinar, I would send the information out to press associations, hoping they would promote it. I'd probably send an email blast to my customers so they could put it on their calendars. I was afraid by overpromoting an event, I would turn off potential customers. What was I thinking?

I began collecting email addresses from everyone in the newspaper business who had ever written to me, every group I had spoken to, and others in the industry. As my list grew into the thousands, I experimented with sending out a couple of reminders about an upcoming webinar. It helped, but I didn't notice a significant increase in attendance.

Things took off when I began consistently reminding folks about upcoming webinars. Now, if I have an upcoming webinar on photo editing, I'll start sending mass emails a month before the event. Then, as the date approaches, I'll send out an email a week before the webinar, then another three days before the class. Finally, I'll send a reminder email the day before the webinar.

What have I learned? Registrations generally come in three waves. A good number of folks, usually about a third of the attendees, will register when they see the first announcement about a month before the webinar. Another group will register after seeing an email three days before the class. Finally, about half of my attendees sign up for a class after seeing an email one day before the webinar. If you pay attention, you will probably see at least five or six emails about each of my webinars.

My other company, which offers CEC credits for folks outside the newspaper industry, hosts multiple webinars each week. We are constantly reminding customers of those webinars about upcoming classes. The more we remind them, the more they register.

What does this have to do with newspapers? Tomorrow, I'll be spending all day with the advertising staff of a newspaper in Tennessee. I always enjoy working with nearby papers. It's nice to work in person instead of online now and then. We'll discuss ways to increase advertising and help our advertisers create more effective ad campaigns. One lesson I'll try to instill is there is no such thing as too much advertising. We're helping our advertisers when we help them understand that – and find ways to reach more potential customers. Another lesson is that we need to stay in constant contact with advertisers. Like my webinar attendees, the more we keep in touch, the more we'll see results.

Where have all the inserts gone?

Publisher Bill Derby wrote to me yesterday to ask if everyone else sees a slowdown in inserts at their papers. He also asked, "If so, do they think they'll be coming back?"

I created a quick post on social media, asking publishers for their take on the subject. I got a lot of responses. Those at larger papers wrote that inserts are way down and probably not returning. Answers from smaller papers ranged from "Ours are way down" to "We're doing okay, but the bigger papers around here are struggling" to "Ours are up, and we're getting more inquiries each week."

So, there you have it. Most folks say their insert business is down or "way down." However, some say their inserts business is holding up, some even increasing. I need to look into what's happening at these papers that are increasing their inserts and see what we can learn from them.

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



We've Got Some Explaining To Do

John Foust, Greensboro, NC

People usually say “no” to things they don’t understand. It’s a salesperson’s job to help prospects understand what he or she is selling. What makes media choice A better than choice B? What’s all this talk about target audiences being better than general audiences? Doesn’t that mean fewer buyers? If a business has been successful for a long time, why spend money on advertising?

You’re probably not worried about these things, but more than a few of your prospects are. There’s a natural tendency to think our prospects are keeping up with what we’re saying, when in reality, that may not be the case. We have to get in step with them before we can expect them to get in step with us.”

Christopher, a veteran ad salesperson, told me about an unusual misunderstanding with a prospect. “When he called to say he wanted to discuss his advertising outlays,” Christopher said, “I immediately thought about the budgeting process. As the conversation progressed, I realized that we were on two completely different wavelengths. He was referring to ad layouts, not ad outlays. We can laugh about it now, but at the time, it took a few minutes before I was able to adjust to the situation.”

Think of a camera. When you use the setting to focus tightly on a photo subject, the background is blurred. Sometimes, we concentrate so much on the center of attention – the person on the other side of the desk – that we lose sight of the things that might be blurred to them.

Here are a few ideas which may help:

1. Think of different ways to explain things. Have plenty of examples in your toolbox. In one case, an analogy might be your best choice and in another, a demonstration may be most appropriate. “Even when I use a map or a chart, I explain the information as simply as possible,” Christopher said. “A picture may be worth a thousand words, but a picture with no explanation is not worth much in a sales presentation.”

2. Break it down into small pieces. Don’t bombard the other person with everything at once. Build your case one point at a time. What good is point number three, if they don’t understand points one and two?

3. Check for clarity. Sure, your sales explanations are crystal clear to you, but how does the other person see them? Unlike a camera, there is no viewfinder in a sales meeting. So, we use other techniques to see if anything is blurry to them.

The most reliable way is to watch for body language and ask questions: “How does this look so far?” “When others see this chart, they often have questions. Does anything come to mind?” “Before we go any further, let me ask if this kind of information is what you need at this point?”

Good selling is a matter of becoming a professional explainer. By eliminating the blurred edges, you can help your prospects and clients see a much clearer picture.

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CREDIT LINE

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. Email for information: john@johnfoust.com

Ryan Dohrn



Don't be a Stranger

Ryan shares the importance of becoming a known entity to your clients and prospective clients. His tips on how to use LinkedIn and Google Alerts as tools are the perfect resources to achieve this.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=orES7uQOi5A>

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](#).