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President's Corner



Stronger Together When Tragedy Strikes



Mike Kolbe

We all like to think our publications are integral pieces to our communities' success. In good times that means celebrating the maintenance or growth of our business communities, publishing graduate pictures each spring, celebrating area sports successes, etc.

In hard times, like the aftermath of a devastating tornado, it means stepping up to provide whatever assistance our community needs. It may be a financial ask, filling volunteer roles or providing extra coverage to disseminate information, even without a monetary return.

Our Shelby County, IA community was hit hard by an EF-3 tornado April 26, leaving dozens of rural homes and farm operations completely decimated or badly damaged. The photo shows the mile-wide tornado as it skirted the edge of Harlan during its 30-mile trek across Shelby County. Coincidentally, our local high school is "The Home of the Cyclones".

This particular twister did not hit a densely populated area, and it seemed FEMA did not fully grasp the value of farming operations and the impact it would have on our county. They were slow to designate Shelby Co. as a disaster area, which is crucial to free up low interest loans and other support for those directly impacted by the storm.

Our Harlan Newspaper team was asked to assist in producing a report to help convince FEMA to designate Shelby Co. a disaster area. Stakeholders throughout the county convened Friday afternoon, May 10 to share ideas of how to quickly and effectively create a video and printed report. Following an hour-long brainstorming session, we broke up into teams of varying expertise and went to work.

We were instructed the reports were to be produced and ready for delivery on Monday. Yes... a 3-day deadline... over the weekend. FEMA was to make its decision on Tuesday, May 14.

It is here I would like to give a shout out to Nori Griffith, a relatively new employee of ours, and new to the Shelby County area. I dragged her along to the meeting knowing she had the composition and organizational skills to create the written report. Even though almost no one in the room knew her, I nominated her to Chair the committee tasked with creating the report. She was more than up to the challenge.

Statistics, photos and video clips were compiled and shared via the SLACK platform so that everyone had access to the information needed. One team created an impactful video, while our team created the written report with damage estimates, photos and narrative about the significance of the lost ag business to area families and communities.

The deadline was met, the reports were delivered to federal officials in Washington, D.C. on Monday, and the Disaster Declaration was signed the following day.

The report includes many vital statistics and photos, and we knew the public would be interested in it, as well. We decided to make it available to everyone, asking only for a free-will donation, with proceeds designated to the local disaster recovery fund. Donations for the report raised over \$1,200 in three weeks, which was presented to officials during a “Town Hall” meeting May 28.

Many of us who don’t have heavy equipment, formal first aid training or other skills needed to help following an emergency were able to contribute in different ways toward the victim recovery effort. Local publications ARE integral pieces of our communities, and we all need to be ready to step up and help ... in good times and bad.

You may view the video and printed report using these links:

- Tornado Recovery Video – copy and paste to your browser: <https://youtu.be/RG6thWQBTuk?feature=shared>
- Tornado Recovery Report: www.harlanonline.com. Click the “2024 Shelby County Tornado Report” tab near the top of the home page.

Mike

From the Office



Aloha from the MFCP Office

Lee Borkowski

Aloha is a Hawaiian word with a rich and multifaceted meaning. While it is commonly used to say “hello” or “goodbye,” its significance goes much deeper. The term encapsulates a sense of welcoming, kindness, and a deep sense of caring for others.

What better word to encompass all things MFCP? That’s why we’ve chosen Aloha as our theme for the Summer Leadership Summit!

The Leadership Summit will be held on Thursday, July 18th, and Friday, July 19th, at the charming boutique Hotel Renovo in Urbandale, Iowa. Room rates are \$129 per night for a standard king or double queen, and MFCP will reimburse each attending member publication for one night's stay.

The summit kicks off on Thursday, July 18th, at 1 PM with two engaging afternoon sessions. Thursday evening, we will be treated to a delightful chef’s dinner featuring the finest in Hawaiian cuisine. The dress code is island casual—embrace the Aloha spirit!

On Friday, July 19th, start your day with a delicious hotel breakfast buffet, followed by our Annual Membership Meeting and a morning of lively roundtable discussions. We’ll wrap up around 11:30 AM, leaving you free to enjoy the rest of the day exploring the area.

We can’t wait to see everyone at the Hotel Renovo.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER!](#) Simply go to Event Registration and sign up today! Please remember to add your activities.

Lee

MVP at Work



Does Your Personality Match Up?

By Amanda Thooft
Production Manager, Star Publications

It is hard to view ourselves how others view us, but it does become helpful if we know how others view us to better our relationships. Recently I took an Enneagram test with the rest of my MVP group. The Enneagram is a personality test that describes people in nine different types of motivations, fears and internal dynamics.

Certain people have a more likely chance to fall into certain categories just because of the roles they have in their day-to-day lives. This is not who we are completely. That is why there is different emphasis on different areas. This is just a way to learn more about ourselves and maybe make it easier to better our relationships with others.

Think about it like learning a new language. If you knew what language your customer spoke you could better serve them in their marketing needs.

Below is the list of nine Enneagram types from truity.com. If you have the time to take the quiz yourself it is well worth it and definitely keeps you thinking. After all, our last MVP meeting was the beginning of May and it still has me thinking.

Type One- The Perfectionist

Ones place a lot of emphasis on following the rules and doing things correctly. Type Ones fear being imperfect and can be extremely strict with themselves and others.

Type Two- The Giver

Twos want to be liked and find ways that they can be helpful to others so that they belong. This type fears being unlovable.

Type Three - The Achiever

Threes want to be successful and admired by other people, and are very conscious of their public image. Type Threes fear failure and not being seen as valuable by other people.

Type Four - The Individualist

Fours want to be unique and to experience deep, authentic emotions. Type Fours fear they are flawed and are overly focused on how they are different from other people.

Type Five - The Investigator

Fives seek understanding and knowledge, and are more comfortable with data than other people. The biggest fear of the Type Five is being overwhelmed by their own needs or the needs of other people.

Type Six - The Skeptic

Sixes are preoccupied with security, seek safety, and like to be prepared for problems. For the Type Six, the greatest fear is being unprepared and unable to defend themselves from danger.

Type Seven - The Enthusiast

Sevens want to have as much fun and adventure as possible and are easily bored. Type Sevens fear experiencing emotional pain, especially sadness, and actively seek to avoid it by staying busy.

Type Eight - The Challenger

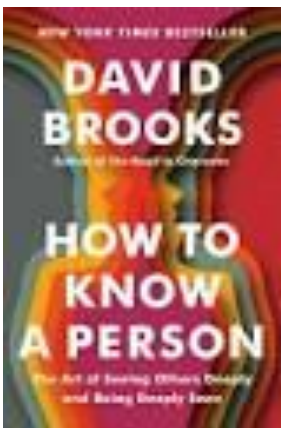
Eights see themselves as strong and powerful and seek to stand up for what they believe in. The greatest fear of the Type Eight is to be powerless, so they focus on controlling their environment.

Type Nine - The Peacemaker

Nines like to go with the flow and let the people around them set the agenda. Type Nines fear pushing people away by prioritizing their own needs, and they tend to be passive.

Amanda

What Do You Think?



Great Minds Think Alike!

*What do Bill Gates and Gladys Van Drie
have in common?*

They both recommend reading *How to Know a Person* by David Brooks.

This past January, in a conversation with Gladys, she mentioned she had just finished reading a wonderful book. She went on to say that she felt everyone would benefit from reading it. Last week, I came across an article listing books on Bill Gates's recommended reading list. And there it was again!

Here's what Bill had to say about *How to Know a Person*:

"I liked David's previous book, *The Road to Character*, but this one is even better. His key premise is one I haven't found elsewhere: that conversational and social skills aren't just innate traits—they can be learned and improved upon. And he provides practical tips for what he calls 'loud listening,' a practice that can help the people around you feel heard and valued. It's more than a guide to better conversations; it's a blueprint for a more connected and humane way of living."

Two really smart people can't be wrong. Add this one to your summer reading list!

Meet Your MVPS

We asked them: “What do you hope to get out of the MVP group?”



Ashley Huisman

New Century Press located in Rock Rapids, IA.

Publications I lay out weekly for NCP include The Lyon County Reporter, The Republic, The Special and The Minnehaha Messenger. I also design ads and work on various other projects throughout the year as a part of the graphic design team. I have been with New Century Press for almost 7 years now, some being part-time and some being full-time. I'm excited to get started with the MVP group, hoping to learn more about the industry and how everyone's day to day processes work. I'm looking forward to bouncing ideas off each other, coming up with solutions to workplace issues, learning new tips and tricks and learning more about myself in the process. It's great to be a part of a group of individuals like myself to be able to communicate with learn together.

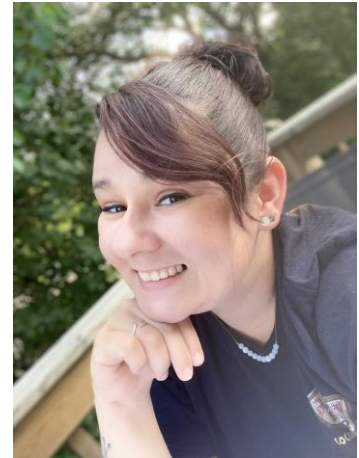
Desiree Whalen (Dez Whalen)

Woodward Communications/Wisconsin-Iowa Shopping News

Account Executive Inside Sales

Years in the industry: 2 Years

MFCP's MVP group has been invaluable to my growth in the publishing industry the last year. I appreciate the opportunity to get to know peers and leaders, alike, in the Midwest Free Community Paper network. The mentorship, professional skills training, networking, tips and tricks, triumphs and challenges that are shared within this group and at conferences has been a game changer for me. My confidence in this industry *and* in myself has grown exponentially in my time in the MVP group.



Melissa Bomkamp

Richland Center Shopping News

Account Executive Outside Sales

Years in the industry: Almost 2 years with the Richland Center Shopping News. I have been in sales for most of my working career.

I would love to get more ideas and tips on how to approach certain things we offer. I'm always up for new ideas!



Amy Kylo

Dairy Star

Staff writer

Years in the industry: 1

I am excited to grow my network through this group. I work remotely, so making connections with colleagues is something I treasure. I look forward to getting to know the people in this industry that otherwise I would be unable to connect with. In the growth aspect, I want to learn increased self-awareness and be better able to create quality work. At free community papers, I know every employee plays a role in the viability and success of the company, and I want to become better to bring more value to my company, myself and the industry as a whole.

Taylor Smith

Fillmore County Journal

Graphic Designer

Years in Industry: 3

I hope to gain a deeper understanding of current trends and practices that will enable me to stay ahead in a competitive business environment. The opportunity to learn from experienced professionals and industry leaders is extremely valuable, and I look forward to the insights and mentorship that this program offers.



Amanda Thooft

Star Publications

Production Manager

Years in the industry: 13 years

I am hoping to expand my knowledge by learning from others in the same industry. In the year I have been in MVP it has been great to get to know others victories and struggles with the newspaper industry and how we can grow and overcome any obstacle in a very vital industry.

Julia Merten

Star Publications - I work with the Dairy Star and Country Acres South publications.

Territory Marketing Advisor

Years in Industry: 2

Being that I am a young professional who is new to the Print/News Industry I am hoping to use this opportunity to grow and learn. Already, I have been impressed by the amazing connections I have made within the industry while attending the MFPC Conference. I look forward to taking the knowledge I gain from conferences and monthly meetings back to my company and the projects that I am working on.



Kevin Slimp



Kevin Slimp
kevin@kevinslimp.com

What You Want to Know

*My inbox and physical mailbox stay full
with requests from readers*

It has already been a busy summer, and I'm not sure summer has officially begun yet (It's June 1 as I write this). Upon returning from my latest trip – to Pennsylvania – yesterday, I was greeted by a stack of packages from publishers – most containing newspapers to critique – and an email folder with plenty of messages from editors, designers, and publishers. To keep all the newspapers I receive from getting wet, I purchased a waterproof container about the size of a pirate's treasure chest, which I placed on the porch by my front door. The mail deliverers and UPS drivers have become well acquainted with my box.

What's on the mind of newspaper folks these days? The answer is “a lot.” Whoever first coined the phrase “newspapers are dead” in the early 2000s apparently never had to go through my email or my box.

Growing Readership

The most common question I receive is, “What can I do to get more readers?” That hasn't changed in the 30 years I've been working with newspapers. We always seem to be looking for a magic potion to make more people want to read our products. I've addressed that question many times in these columns, often with a list of ways to grow papers, but most often, the answer comes down to improving the quality of the newspaper.

Quality is a funny thing. It encompasses more than the “look” of a newspaper. It includes writing high-caliber stories that meet the reading desires of potential readers. Quality entails research, such as focus groups, to understand what readers want – and don't want – in their newspaper. And obviously, the importance of design can't be overestimated.

Improving the Product

The packages in my front porch box usually contain newspapers to be critiqued. Upgrading the content and design of your newspaper should be at the forefront of growing your paper. That doesn't mean you have to send your paper to me. This means that your paper should develop a method of critiquing every element of content regularly. But couldn't I just look at these pages on the screen? Sure, but seriously evaluating a newspaper requires taking notes on the pages. After I critique a page, it generally looks like someone has bled all over it.

Increasing Ad Revenue

Increasing revenue is on everyone's mind. I can't remember a time when it wasn't. I lead a lot of webinars on various topics. There was a time when photo editing or page design classes would be the most popular. These days, sessions related to increasing revenue draw the biggest crowds. I've written my share of columns on increasing revenue, but the best way I know of to increase ad sales is to go out and visit more potential advertisers physically. It sounds simplistic, but those of you who have been around the block a few times know it's true. Don't worry. If you happen to be signed up for one of my future webinars on increasing ad revenue, I'll have more to share than "just get out more." However, if you want to sell more ads, just get out more. It works.

Next up for me? North Carolina, Virginia, then over to see my friends at Arkansas Press Association. When I return home, I imagine the box next to my door will be full.

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



Put a Stop to Workplace Silos

John Foust, Greensboro, NC

Jim, who used to work with a local volunteer fire department, told me about the technique they used to keep everyone on the right roads to arrive at fire sites. “It was in the days before GPS,” he said. “We were in an area with a lot of rural roads – and since we were driving to the fire from different directions – we couldn’t afford for someone to miss a turn. Lives were in the balance, and time was crucial.”

He explained that the lead vehicle – the firetruck – had bags of lime on the front seat. Lime is the powder that is used to mark baselines on baseball fields. Rain washes it away eventually, so there is no long-lasting image. Every time the truck made a turn, someone threw a bag of lime onto the pavement (or the gravel) at the intersection. The bag burst open and made a large, unmistakable mark on the road. The lime left an easy path to follow for the entire firefighting team.

“The system got us to fires as quickly as possible,” Jim said. “Night or day, there were clear signs at each turn. Without the lime, there’s no telling how many houses and barns – and most important, lives – would have been lost. One way to say it is that we were all on the same page.”

In business as well as in life-saving situations, it’s imperative to be informed. Like Francis Bacon so succinctly wrote: “Knowledge is power.”

I recently talked with Abby, who said her entire media company is siloed. “That has filtered down to our ad department. No one knows much about what anyone else is doing. “It’s frustrating,” she said, “We could provide a lot of help to each other, but management has the philosophy that we should think about our own accounts and nothing else. When a new advertiser comes on board, sometimes we don’t know about it until their ads start running.”

Abby has a simple suggestion that might be of help: “Talk and listen. Every now and then, some managers like to organize team-building activities, but honestly, I think structured team exercises are a waste of time. The biggest thing that will build teamwork is to know what’s going on around us. Our work is impacted by the people in our department, along with the work they are doing. Real teams work in an informed and supportive environment.”

Abby’s story represents an extreme example, but I’ll bet there are companies in your hometown that have silos. It’s difficult to work *for* a company like that, and it’s difficult to work *with* a client like that.

Patrick Lencioni, in his excellent book *Silos, Politics and Turf Wars*, writes: “Silos – and the turf wars they enable – devastate organizations. They waste resources, kill productivity, and jeopardize the achievement of goals.”

Are there silos in your ad department? If so, maybe it’s time to put down some markers to let others know what’s going on.

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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. Email for information: john@johnfoust.com

Ryan Dohrn



Getting Past NO with New Clients

This month Ryan helps us understand why clients tend to say “NO” as a default and how your approach can change that automatic “no” to a successful conversation.

He encourages you to prime the conversation for success by not introducing yourself first but by starting with a success story model. Click the link below to see just how with just a few easy tips you can avoid that automatic “no” default.

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

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*