



## ACP Virtual Conference

If Covid has done anything positive for me over the past year it was that it led me to embrace the powers of the virtual world. Video calls and meetings are now the new normal.

Although, I anxiously await the days of meeting in person again, I continue to take advantage of every opportunity I can to participate in virtual events.

The ACP Virtual Conference is definitely one worth participating in! It is not too late to register and I would encourage you and your staff to take advantage of this training opportunity.

From now through April 30<sup>th</sup> there are sessions that will provide something for everyone on your team. All sessions are free of charge...just another benefit of your MFCP membership. There are 14 sessions in all. Four sessions from The Leadership Institute which will earn you credit towards your AAE Certification.

Personally, I can share that I have 6 sessions coming up that I am excited to participate in. The Idea Exchange being one. Over the past few years, I have been fortunate to have attended the in person AFCP Conferences. The idea exchange was the one session that always "paid my way". It only takes one idea to generate new revenue in your market and the idea exchange gives you so many great ideas!

Overall, this Virtual Conference will help bridge the networking gap that Covid has created and I would encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity. Click the link below to find the program schedule and register today.

<https://alpha.amberplains.com/fmi/webd?homeurl=http://www.afcp.org#AFCPWebRegistration>

Jodi Peterson

If you didn't get a chance to view the presentations April 9<sup>th</sup> you missed two really good ones! The first was **entitled 8 Things Every Publisher Should Track & Share**. It was presented by John Thomas Cribb of Cribb and Associates. The link to watch this session is: <https://vimeo.com/534586270>

The second session presented that day was entitled **7 Ways to Engage Your Reader**. You can watch it here: <https://vimeo.com/533606735>



## **Schedule a site visit...**

Now that the winter weather is behind us it's time for me to hit the road!

I'm planning to make a couple of trips this year with the goal of visiting as many member publications as I can. The purpose of my trip is to make connections and to better understand what our members are wanting from MFCP.

Another reason for my visit will be to share info with the sales teams so they are comfortable selling and entering classified and display ads into our system.

Can I put you down for a site visit? If so, please click the link below and select the day of the week that will work best for you. I'll add you to the schedule and do all I can to make it to your market.

<https://forms.gle/Pu1eJoeBpuMrXiUQ6>

I hope to hear from you soon!

Lee  
888-899-6327  
[Director@mfc.org](mailto:Director@mfc.org)

## **Update your SRDS listings.**

Don't forget to update your SRDS listing this spring. Buyers are accessing SRDS data every day. Make sure yours is up to date! To login to the system use the following:

Username: PROMOTE

Password: MUSEUMS

*Note: This password expires at the end of the week. So, do it today!*

## **ANY VIKING FANS OUT THERE????**

I received an email the other day from a person that loves the Vikings and enjoys writing about them.

He's offering a column for a trial period that may be of interest to your readers. Below is the info that he sent me:

*Hi, I'm Jordan, owner of Wright Media, and I have been writing Vikings articles for over a decade! I am trying something new due to the awesome feedback received from small town newspapers JUST LIKE YOU!*

Seriously, check out the review below...

“As a Vikings fan myself I knew I’d enjoy reading Jordan’s weekly column, but it became apparent rather quickly from the comments I’ve heard that many of my subscribers enjoy his column also. Jordan seems to have “inside” information on all the Vikings news from top to bottom that you may not learn from any other sources, making his column rather unique.”

-Troy Schwans, Bridgewater Tribune

Because I am confident in our articles I've decided to give them away for free to a limited number of newspapers to use as you please! NO STRINGS ATTACHED.

The newspapers we currently partner with have seen their audience grow and have become loyal partners of ours, we feel you will too as the readers absolutely love it!

So what's in it for me? I feel that your newspaper and audience will like these articles so much the next few months that after our trial period you will come back for more.

Grab our most recent article

here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aghfMysi157CXRPEN0V6UCx8fEhc2Tyn/view?usp=sharing>

Feel free to read it, and even use it in your newspaper!!

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## **Publisher's Roundtable**

Our May publishers' call will be held Thursday, May 13th at 9AM. Our featured revenue idea will be: Community Newsletters –by Greg Birkett.

**The Zoom info stays the same from month to month. It is shown below.**

Topic: PUBLISHER'S ROUNDTABLE

Time: Thursday, May 13th at 9AM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89536727860?pwd=bjVzTlpKWj84b1dwTXdjbE4vb05lQT09>

Meeting ID: 895 3672 7860

Passcode: 626106

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)

# The real world of advertising sales—beyond the first meeting magic words strategy



By Bob Berting, Berting Communications

Let's take the first prospect meeting. This is not the time to high pressure a prospect. Recently we see a strategy to present options and recommendations in the first sales meeting. After a barrage of asking clever questions, presenting ideas on the spot, talking about the Corona Virus, developing the proposal, giving a variety of pricing options, giving testimonials, overcoming objections, attempting to close the prospect ...**all these barrage of actions are on the first meeting.**

Obviously not the way to sell the prospect on the first call. This approach could not only irritate the prospect but put the advertising salesperson making the presentation look very pushy and not an advertising sales professional and a trusted advisor.

## **Introducing the first call of a 3 call process-establishing credibility**

Instead of doing everything on the first call, let's look at a more reasonable process to sell the prospect. Let's begin by examining a good first call on the prospect. According to most experts, after you have researched their website, now is the time to tell them what you know about their business—and how interested you are in what they are trying to achieve. This usually leads to questions you can ask about their business goals. The whole thrust of effort is designed to get them to open up and reveal everything about their business and their marketing goals plus hopefully their budget for advertising.

As a media buyer for my advertising agency of 30 years, I have been subjected to this approach. In a typical example, I'm sitting there with a media salesperson and I'm thinking "who is this person--can I trust them—why should I tell them all about my plans—if I've got goals I want to achieve why should I reveal them when I hardly know him or her?" The bottom line is that they have no credibility with me...I'm not ready to open up until I can thoroughly trust them, think they're reliable, and have confidence in them.

## **Identification**

So the answer is, you've got to strike a balance between building a relationship and at the same time have them trust and believe you. Here is a time tested strategy for identifying yourself to the prospect:

The advertising salesperson opens with the following "I'd like to talk to you about your business but I think it's very important that you know more about who we are" The prospect now has these questions and thoughts in their mind which needs to be addressed as to who you are:

I don't know who you are—what is your background experience —what are your qualifications?

I don't know your company—what is the complete name of your publication—what other businesses do you have?

I don't know your company's product—tell me about your print and digital display ads—website—local news

I don't know your company's customers—give me testimonials of people in my line of business.

Once this information is presented- the prospect now is in a position to better trust and to believe in your credibility. You'll notice there has been no mention of showing a media kit. It has all been verbal.

### **Building Rapport**

There's always a likeability factor in selling. It's amazing what a smile can do to break down barriers between people. It's always important to find common ground and build rapport. How many times have we heard the phrase "build rapport" but even in today's world of selling it's amazing how many times we forget to do it. It still means something for a prospect to be complimented on their hobby or something they've done.

### **Creation of interest**

At the conclusion of the first call —that is the time to do what I call "gravitational selling" This is where you want the prospect to gravitate to you in preparation for the second call. It also can be called "creation of interest". Now you tell the prospect that on the next visit, you want to learn more about their business and show them how you will create great custom designed ads for them in print and digital as well as formulating an advertising plan that will reach their target audience more effectively. Then you ask for permission to have a second visit.

### **The second call**

Fact finding approach—do rough layout sketches incorporating the big idea—analyze why rough layouts are done—how to build their image--ask about their budget—ask permission to bring advertising plan and comprehensive layouts to third meeting.

### **The third call**

Presenting the comprehensive layout ideas—Presenting the advertising plan—Covering objections—Closing techniques---Power closing sentences

### **Retention—who is going to service the account?'**

Hopefully the prospect is now the customer of the publication. Someone has to service the new account. I wonder who could that person be? Why it's the person who sold the account of course. All of the ad sales training experts who promote selling everything on the first call never talk about what happens after the prospect becomes a customer. Someone who knows the account quite well has to be a marketing partner with the new customer by preparing the ads, presenting more publication services like inserts, special promotions, etc. The customer expects this situation to happen the way I have described it.

High customer retention starts with the first contact with a prospect and continues throughout the lifetime of a relationship and successful retention effort takes this entire lifestyle into account. A publication's ability to attract and retain new customers is related not only to its product and services, but also the way it services its existing customers. This service generates a reputation that creates a powerful image within and across the marketplace. Customer retention also has a direct impact on profitability.

### **Trust and believability**

The bedrock of customer retention is also based on these factors:

- The image and reputation of the publication. How does it fit in the media mix of the customer? What is the strength of their readership?
- The trust and believability of the salesperson.
- The plan of action for the customer will include the following promises:
  1. I will design a compelling advertising campaign using my publication to present your products and services in the most creative way possible.
  2. I will work with you as your marketing partner to fine tune your ad campaign and adjust it to changing market conditions.
  3. I will treat your advertising dollars as if they were mine, giving you the best discounts available to control your costs.
  4. I will keep you up to date with what is going on in the market from my communication with other business owners.

### **The final word on customer retention**

The number one place publications can get revenue is through retention. They need to stop being so product oriented and work on establishing an effective strategy for their customers. That strategy will include a marketing plan which will commit the customers to a long range advertising program with the publication.

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### **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](http://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](mailto:bob@bobberting.com) or 317-849-5408.



## 12 ad design tips

By John Foust, Raleigh, NC

Want to get more eyes on your ads? Let's take a quick look at some ad design tips:

1. **Keep things simple and uncluttered.** The four basic elements of a print ad are (1) headline, (2) illustrative element, (3) body copy and (4) logo. When they are arranged in a way that is easy to follow – and when there are no unnecessary images – the ad is more likely to be noticed.
2. **Use easy-to-read line breaks in headlines.** A line break is where one line ends and the next line begins. Since readers naturally pause for a split second at the end of a line, the break should be placed to look visually correct -- and sound right in the mind. Here are two headlines. The second one works better.
3. **Use a graphic hook.** A dominant visual element stands out on the page or on the screen. If an ad features a number of illustrations or photos, make one considerably larger than the others. Don't hesitate to make the image so large that it bleeds off the edge.
4. **Use white space.** Like a room with furniture which is placed too close together, a crowded ad doesn't provide enough room to navigate. In addition to giving readers some walking room, white space can be a powerful graphic hook.
5. **Don't use distracting borders.** It's what's inside the border that counts. The border shouldn't become an extra element.
6. **Use all-caps sparingly.** There are two times to use all upper-case characters: (1) in short words in a short headline or (2) in a proper name, like IBM, BMW or NHL.
7. **Use readable fonts.** Trendy styles can be difficult to read. It's best to stick with traditional fonts. Generally speaking, serif fonts are more legible in lengthy body copy and bolder sans serif fonts are fine for headlines.
8. **Put the logo at the bottom right or bottom center.** Resist the temptation to place the logo at the top. Because we read from top to bottom and from left to right, an ad's logical ending point – the spot for the logo – is at the bottom right or center.
9. **Use relevant illustrations and photos.** Pictures must be meaningful and should clarify the headline. The best illustrations show the advertised product in use or demonstrate a benefit.

10. **10. Set body copy flush left.** Ragged left text is nearly impossible to read, because readers are accustomed to starting each line at a consistent left margin. Justified copy blocks are problematic, as well, because they create wide spaces between some words.
11. **11. Use color with restraint.** Research shows that color helps ads stand out. But don't overdo it. Too much color creates clutter. You've probably seen ads that look like an explosion in a crayon factory. That's no way to appeal to readers.
12. **12. Stay away from reverses.** It's not a good idea to use white images and words on a dark background. Readers are accustomed to dark print on a light background. Make it easy for them.

## COPYRIGHT LINE

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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. E-mail for information: [john@johnfoust.com](mailto:john@johnfoust.com)



**Peter W. Wagner**  
Creative House Print Media Consultants  
[pww@iowainformation.com](mailto:pww@iowainformation.com)  
Cell: 712-348-3550

MONTHLY COLUMN EXCLUSIVE TO PRESS ASSOCIATIONS

APRIL 2021

## Papers can't depend on retail advertisers to survive

Publishers looking to reboot their markets following the pandemic need to recognize the retail sector is no longer their best revenue source.

The recent demise of one Minnesota newspaper, the Warroad Pioneer, is well documented in the April, issue of Reader's Digest magazine.

I have personal knowledge of the Pioneer story because I spent two days working with Warroad Pioneer publisher Rebecca Golden in 1999, speaking for her with the community on how she and local businesses might thrive.

Warroad, like much of America, is a small community. The region is known for its great fishing, internationally acclaimed hockey stars and an excellent high school hockey team.

The community has a decent number of small retail businesses for its size, but many of them depend on

the tourist trade, not the local residents, to exist. The local supermarket distributes its weekly preprint in an out-of-town shopper and the only new car dealer, once a regular major advertiser, is investing most of its dollars into online advertising.

Golden published a good paper. It was well written and nicely designed. But her dependence on retail advertising was her Achilles' heel. It wasn't that the majority of local stores didn't want to support her, they just thought they didn't need to advertise to locals they believed were already "loyal" customers. Most didn't understand how important a local paper is to holding a community together. Warroad's local businesses either forgot, or were never taught, the importance of TOMA (Top of Mind Awareness) and the marketing axiom "Seventy-five percent of your customers live within 25 miles of your front door." All across America newspapers and free circulation publications are facing the same situation. Most national and regional chain stores, once a lucrative source of revenue, have deserted smaller communities. The small, local boutiques that replaced them are often poorly informed regarding the reach of digital advertising, too tightly financed to afford traditional advertising and are more of a hobby for the owner than a business.

So where does today's publisher turn for new revenue? And what can a paper's ad manager do to increase the company's bottom line?

In our mostly rural communities, we've turned to the service providers, local manufacturing firms and once overlooked professionals as fresh revenue sources. Locally owned banks and credit unions as well as full-service insurance agencies are good examples of service providers that continue to be excellent potential advertisers.

Others include locally managed hospitals and medical facilities, home construction and sales organizations, privately owned colleges, universities and regional community colleges. The city itself, the local chamber of commerce, community celebrations and annual event organizations as well as the economic development director also are emerging sources for new advertising dollars.

These are major dollar advertisers who understand that the local newspaper is key to creating community and a spirit of consensus. Without a strong, united community those businesses have a limited future with a declining number of clients, students, employees and attendees. It also will lead to a diminishing tax base. These resources have the deep pockets and good reason to underwrite the future of their hometown paper.

But it doesn't stop there. Local, smaller professionals from the fancy-cuts men's barbershop to local CPA and law firms are becoming good community supports and local paper advertisers.

Still, harvesting those new dollars requires creativity and a commitment to more one-of-a-kind special sections and numerous weekly community support pages.

Special projects and sections which draw strong support from the first group of advertisers include tabloid or multi-page salutes to law enforcement officers, volunteer or city firefighters, health-care workers (including the EMT volunteers) in your area and even the members of your local FFA and 4-H chapters.

Other ideas include "(Town Name), An All-American City" and "All Roads Lead To (Town Name)." The "All-American City" project features articles about nationally recognized people — military, political, religious, business leaders — born in your community as well as nationally known products, practices and cultural changes that originated in your town."

"All Roads Lead To" is a guide of exciting experiences that can be found by driving into your community via key highways located on each side of town.

Both sections, and many others like them, have been well received and supported by local-minded businesses that appreciate sections that promote the history, fun and value of living in their town.

We do a different approach to the annual summer series in our N'West Iowa REVIEW each year. The multiweek series usually includes coverage of 12-14 communities in our four-county area.

The smaller businesses on the second list — as well as many traditional advertisers — are excellent prospects for regular monthly pages that provide a consistent, contracted advertising package at an economical predetermined cost. Some such pages include 6-pacs, 8-pacs, monthly professional page, our

Home Improvement page, the “I believe in (your town)” sponsored page and our A to Z Business Directory.

Even more exceptional dollars are available by selling an unlimited number of once-a-year salute pages promoting everything from Easter Sunday church service schedules to homecoming courts to annual celebration ideas.

So, take a big breath and put a smile on your face. There continues to be a strong future for community papers. We simply need to direct our attention to the advertisers that believe in the community and the value of the hometown paper. It will require hard work and fresh thinking, but the survival of the printed paper is well worth the effort.

**Forward this email to your friends and associates!**

*Peter W. Wagner is founder and publisher of the award winning Sheldon, IA, N'West Iowa REVIEW and 13 additional publications. This free monthly GET REAL newsletter is produced especially for publishers, editors and sales managers who still believe in the value and importance of the PRINTED paper. [CLICK HERE](#), to also receive Wagner's free PAPER DOLLARS email newsletter featuring a unique sales ideas and promotions. The two monthly email newsletters contain information completely different from each other. You can contact Wagner can be contacted at [pww@iowainformation.com](mailto:pww@iowainformation.com) or (CELL) 712-348-355 for information regarding his convention programs and webinars on publishing better papers and enjoying greater profit.*