



## Presidents Corner...

Looking for an easy way to boost your revenue during the month of July while promoting shopping local? Well, MFCP has the promotion for you!

During the month of July MFCP will be running its' Dog Days of Summer promotion. Join in the promotion and you have the chance of bringing home an additional \$1,500 in prize money to be spent in your local markets.

This is the first time we've run this promotion. We offered something similar in January of this year. And, like all promotions, you measure what worked, what didn't, and make changes for the better.

The Richland Center Shopping News took part in the Cabin Fever promotion hosted by MFCP last January. The way the program was laid out we felt we had nothing to lose and much to gain, especially during January. In the end we had 11 businesses choose to participate, 7 of them where are not normal "January" advertisers. Since each participant must advertise all 4 weeks of the promotion, we offered a Buy 3 Get One Free promotion. And, in addition to that we asked each business to donate a \$25 Gift Card to their business. In the end we had a weekly drawing of one local winner for a prize package of \$75 and then their name was submitted to MFCP for the larger drawing.

Although we were not one of the MFCP winners, had we been, we would have used that cash prize to purchase more gift certificates from those businesses participating in the promotion for our winner. The promotion is super easy and can be customized to meet your needs. In January, just by participating in this promotion, we brought in approx. \$5,500 we wouldn't have had in advertising revenue. Needless to say, my staff is excited to be offering the Dog Days promotion to their clients this coming July.

There is still time to register as a participant in the Dog Days promotion. Contact Lee Borkowski for more information or to register today! [director@mfcpc.org](mailto:director@mfcpc.org). Phone 715-340-9500.



## From the office...

### If you've seen me.....you've seen us both!

Greeting from the office!

It's been an exciting summer so far with lots of changes at MFCP.

As you may recall, Vickie Weingartz retired effective May 28<sup>th</sup>. And, I must tell you she left some mighty big shoes to fill. Needing to find a quality candidate, we started a search. One of the tools we used was the MCN classified ad program. We received inquiries from many qualified individuals. So, if you have a client looking to fill an open position (and, who doesn't these days!), please consider selling them an MCN ad (we even have a buy three week, get four special right now). You will be pleased with how easy it is to sell them into the program – and they will be pleased with the results they receive.

Anyway, we ended up having Sue Pilla from Richland Center apply and we hired her. She started the last week of May so was able to get a bit of training from Vickie. Sue has a very strong background in free papers having worked at the Richland Center Shopping News for over 17 years as a classified receptionist and as the distribution manager. I've known Sue for over 10 years and was pleased when I found out she was interested in a part-time position.

Funny story: Sue and I have a small business on the side – Spot On Woodworking. We dabble in furniture making and finishing. We even have official Spot-On Woodworking T-shirts in a gazillion different colors and we often wear them out and about. The first day of work Sue stopped in to my home office for some materials and I invited her to observe our MCN Zoom call. She stood behind me. Upon joining the call Julia Thompson did a double take and exclaimed: "how can you be sitting down and standing up at the same time!?"

I looked at Sue – and sure enough, she had the same shirt on as me. Our hair is similar, both wear glasses, etc. It was good for a laugh.

So, if you've seen me – you'll probably feel like you already know Sue! She looks forward to meeting all of you in Des Moines at the conference September 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>.

## Publisher's Roundtable

Our June publishers' call will be held Thursday, June 17<sup>th</sup> 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, June 17<sup>th</sup> at 9AM

Join Zoom Meeting

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

Meeting ID: 895 3672 7860

Passcode: 626106

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+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

# POSTAL PRICE INCREASE -

By Donna Hanbery  
Executive Director, SMC

As promised, and feared, the USPS flexed its newly granted pricing authority to file a mid-year price change seeking close to the maximum amount of additional rate increases it is now entitled to charge under the Postal Regulatory Commission's decision and final November 2020 Order in the ten year rate review (this is the Order that is still under appeal by mailers challenging any increases greater than the CPI rate cap regime established in the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006).

When the Postal Service rolled out its ten-year plan in March 2021, the Postmaster General, Louis DeJoy, repeatedly stated in meeting with associations, and in other press releases and public forums, that the Postal Service would do what it could to use self-help to address its financial problems and would use its newly granted pricing authority as one of the "tools in its toolbox" to seek a significant increase mid-year. In spite of unified industry opposition to a mid-year rate increase, the USPS has filed a case with the PRC that will, if approved as filed, result in increases averaging 6.8% in Market Dominant products on August 29, 2021.

For free paper publishers that distribute their papers by saturation flat mail, and are able to dropship their papers to the local DDU, the increase is significantly more modest than the Market Dominant average. The rate increase for saturation flat mail brought to the DDU is approximately 2.4% for pieces weighing up to the break point of 4 ounces and is similar for heavier pound rate priced pieces.

For publishers that have been doing TMC programs that do not qualify for high density plus rates, or newspapers that are mailing at periodical rates, (in country or out of country) the increases are significantly higher. High density rates and periodical rates will see increases around 9%. The justification for the higher than averages increases for periodicals is due to the failure of this class of mail to cover its attributable costs. The divergence in prices between saturation mail and basic high-density is largely in recognition of the differences between these two products. Saturation mail is used predominately to reach all homes and businesses in a given area as part of a mail program or general advertising program. High density has become more of an extension of pre-sorting. The Postal Service explains the higher rates for basic high density as a move to make these prices more in line with other carrier route rates and sortation schemes for other flat mail. For newspapers that are doing TMC programs that qualify for high-density plus, the rate increase is much less, and more in line with the increases for other saturation flat pieces entered at the DDU or SCF.

Two disappointing areas in the rate filing are the higher rates for saturation flat mail entered at the SFC and for detached marking labels (DML). The increase for saturation flats entered at the SCF, both below and above 4 ounces is 5%. The rate for the DML will increase from today's rate of 6 cents to 7 cents. In spite of efforts by the Saturation Mailers Coalition to explain how the DML helps shared mail programs and free paper publisher attract new customers to the mail, the service still appears to perceive the DML as a product that does not cover its own "separate" costs or believes (mistakenly) that the DML competes with other Postal Service products like solo mail or EDDM Retail. This DML rate increase, on top of the one cent increase back in January 2020, is very disappointing. SMC members and free paper publishers have repeatedly told the USPS that its handling costs for a DML need to be considered in the aggregate with the high mark up and unit contribution of the saturation flat piece it must accompany.

For those wondering where the Postal Service got this additional authority, the answers lie in the PRC Ten-Year Rate Review Order. The PRC reasoned that the USPS should be able to charge higher rates to make up for mail volume it loses. Although this approach to pricing strikes many mailers as ridiculous and rewarding behavior and pricing actions the USPS can control, this ruling gave the USPS an additional 4.5 percent of additional rate authority based on the year end financial reports of the USPS for COVID-crushed mailing volumes of 2020. The Service was also given an additional 1.062 percent pricing authority for payments made in connection with its funding liabilities for Postal Service retirees. The balance of the increase is the approx. 1.244 CPI increase to the date of the filing.

What does this mean for future increases and changes? The filing stated that "the Governors have determined to shift from the Postal Service's previous January implementation schedule for annual price increase to an August timeline for 2021. The Governors have not yet determined whether this timeline shift will apply to future years." One encouraging note is that the filing did include details on Postal Service promotions for 2022. If approved by the PRC, the USPS would not need to file again in the fall for approval of promotions in the 2022 calendar. Absent runaway inflation, the upside to another Postal Filing in the fall for a January increase would be very small.

The promotions provided for 2022 are similar to promotions that have been offered in the past. But some good news may be available for technologically savvy mailers or advertisers that can create mail pieces and promotions for promotions that use technology that is more complex, with higher barriers to entry. For more complex technologies,

the amount of the upfront discount available may be as high as 3 or 4 percent. The traditional, not so complex, technology may still qualify for an upfront discount of 2 percent.

Although it is hard to find any silver linings in a mid-year price increase, after the year of business setbacks free papers and shared mailers experienced due to COVID, members of the Saturation Mailers Coalition, and the free paper industry, can be somewhat relieved that the Postal Service seems to recognize the difference between saturation mail products, and all other marketing mail. SMC and some of our individual members, have been talking to USPS officials, in Marketing, Pricing, Financing, and other Departments, to explain that there are growth opportunities for the USPS and our businesses with a different approach to Postal Pricing for saturation shared mail programs, community and free papers, coupon letters and magazines. The rates proposed in this mid-year adjustment suggest some of the right people are listening. We can also hope that these rates may provide price stability for another 12-14 months with no end of year rate increase.

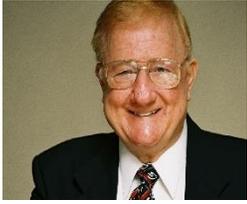
**USPS Marketing Mail Flats Postage Rates--Enhanced Carrier Route (USPS Rates for August 29, 2021 Implementation)**  
*(All Rates Shown in Cents)*

SUBCLASS/Rate Category	For Pieces Weighing 4.0 Ounces or Less /1 /2				For Pieces Weighing More Than 4.0 Ounces /1 /2							
	Current Rate	New Rates	% Diff	Amount Diff	Current Rates		New Rates		% Difference		Amount Difference	
					Per Piece	PLUS Per Pound	Per Piece	PLUS Per Pound	Per Piece	Per Pound	Per Piece	Per Pound
ECR FLATS - Basic	32.0	35.3	10.3%	3.3	12.6	70.5	14.7	82.2	16.7%	16.6%	2.1	11.7
NDC Entry	26.5	30.9	8.4%	2.4	12.6	58.0	14.7	64.7	16.7%	11.6%	2.1	6.7
SCF Entry	27.4	29.7	8.4%	2.3	12.6	55.4	14.7	59.8	16.7%	7.9%	2.1	4.4
Delivery Unit Entry	26.7	28.9	8.2%	2.2	12.6	51.1	14.7	56.5	16.7%	10.6%	2.1	5.4
ECR FLATS - Basic CR Bundles/Pallets	29.9	33.2	11.0%	3.3	10.7	70.5	12.6	82.2	17.8%	16.6%	1.9	11.7
NDC Entry	26.4	28.8	9.1%	2.4	10.7	58.0	12.6	64.7	17.8%	11.6%	1.9	6.7
SCF Entry	25.3	27.6	9.1%	2.3	10.7	55.4	12.6	59.8	17.8%	7.9%	1.9	4.4
Delivery Unit Entry	24.6	26.8	8.9%	2.2	10.7	51.1	12.6	56.5	17.8%	10.6%	1.9	5.4
ECR FLATS High Density /3	25.8	28.9	12.0%	3.1	9.8	60.9	13.1	63.0	33.7%	3.4%	3.3	2.1
NDC Entry	22.0	25.0	13.6%	3.0	9.8	45.4	13.1	47.4	33.7%	4.4%	3.3	2.0
SCF Entry	21.3	24.3	14.1%	3.0	9.8	42.6	13.1	44.7	33.7%	4.9%	3.3	2.1
Delivery Unit Entry	19.7	22.2	12.7%	2.5	9.8	36.5	13.1	36.5	33.7%	0.0%	3.3	-
ECR FLATS High Density CR Bundles/Pallets	25.8	27.9	8.1%	2.1	10.6	60.9	12.1	63.0	14.2%	3.4%	1.5	2.1
NDC Entry	22.0	24.0	9.1%	2.0	10.6	45.4	12.1	47.4	14.2%	4.4%	1.5	2.0
SCF Entry	21.3	23.3	9.4%	2.0	10.6	42.6	12.1	44.7	14.2%	4.9%	1.5	2.1
Delivery Unit Entry	19.7	21.2	7.6%	1.5	10.6	36.5	12.1	36.5	14.2%	0.0%	1.5	-
ECR FLATS - High Density Plus	23.2	24.1	3.9%	0.9	8.0	60.9	8.3	63.0	3.8%	3.4%	0.3	2.1
NDC Entry	19.4	20.2	4.1%	0.8	8.0	45.4	8.3	47.4	3.8%	4.4%	0.3	2.0
SCF Entry	18.7	19.5	4.3%	0.8	8.0	42.6	8.3	44.7	3.8%	4.9%	0.3	2.1
Delivery Unit Entry	17.1	17.4	1.6%	0.3	8.0	36.5	8.3	36.5	3.8%	0.0%	0.3	-
ECR FLATS - Saturation	22.4	23.4	4.5%	1.0	7.2	60.9	7.6	63.0	5.6%	3.4%	0.4	2.1
NDC Entry	18.6	19.5	4.8%	0.9	7.2	45.4	7.6	47.4	5.6%	4.4%	0.4	2.0
SCF Entry	17.9	18.8	5.0%	0.9	7.2	42.6	7.6	44.7	5.6%	4.9%	0.4	2.1
Delivery Unit Entry	16.3	16.7	2.5%	0.4	7.2	36.5	7.6	36.5	5.6%	0.0%	0.4	-
EDDM	22.5	23.5	4.4%	1.0	7.3	60.9	7.7	63.0	5.5%	3.4%	0.4	2.1
NDC Entry	18.7	19.6	4.8%	0.9	7.3	45.4	7.7	47.4	5.5%	4.4%	0.4	2.0
SCF Entry	18.0	18.9	5.0%	0.9	7.3	42.6	7.7	44.7	5.5%	4.9%	0.4	2.1
Delivery Unit Entry	16.4	16.8	2.4%	0.4	7.3	36.5	7.7	36.5	5.5%	0.0%	0.4	-

Add \$0.065 (currently \$0.055) for each piece addressed using a Detached Address Label with no advertising or \$0.070 for a Detached Address Label containing advertising (currently \$0.060).

/1 Per piece maximum weight is 4.0 ounces before piece/pound rates apply.

/2 Saturation, High Density Plus, and High Density letter-shaped pieces, that weigh more than 4.0 ounces must pay the piece and pound prices shown in the applicable Saturation, High Density Plus, and High Density Flats (Commercial and Nonprofit) price tables. These pieces cannot be entered at a DDU and must be prepared as letters. Carrier Route letter-shaped pieces that weigh more than 3.5 ounces, but not more than 4.0 ounces, must pay Carrier Route Flats (4.0 ounces or less) prices. These pieces cannot be entered at a DDU and must be prepared as letters. Carrier Route letter-shaped pieces that weigh more than 4.0 ounces must pay Carrier Route Flats (greater than 4.0 ounces) per piece and per pound prices. These pieces cannot be entered at a DDU and must be prepared as letters.



## Bob Berting Article

### "6 Point Service Philosophy For Publications"

By Bob Berting, Berting Communications

After the sale, many times, there is a letdown in the manner in which a new customer is serviced. As a matter of fact, a lot of business is lost because the intensity of caring drops off and the customer is now taken for granted. The publication salesperson who sold the account sometimes doesn't know why the new customer has lost interest. Is it because the response is lacking, is it because other media competition has convinced him or her that they have made a mistake in going with your publication—or what happened? I'll give you the answer. Many times it's because the publication doesn't have a service philosophy that resonates with the new customer and takes them for granted. Here are 6 ways for a winning service philosophy:

1. "We want your business." What do we have to do to show you how much we appreciate your business?
2. "We want to make you happy." We not only want to make you happy but very satisfied.
3. "We are as close as your phone." Call us if you have any questions. We want to hear if you have any questions.
4. "We take care of our contract customers." You have made a commitment to us, so we owe you the utmost consideration.
5. "We want you to feel comfortable". This is important because there should be a definite comfort level with us.
6. "Confidentiality". We will never discuss your business goals with your competitor

#### **The overall important factor is trust**

When it comes to earning a customer's trust, actions speak louder than words. Sometimes it takes a little more time and effort to forge that bond, but trust is the most important factor in developing long range relationships. The 4 elements of trust are: competence, reliability, intentions, and appearance.

When you know advertising and your publication well, you will inspire the customer's confidence. They will look to you for answers to their problems, so make yourself a well read resource. Take constant responsibility for your own career growth and sales expertise. Do the things necessary to encourage your customers to have faith in **you**.

Your reliability will be the most important factor in their decision to trust you. Position yourself as a problem solver in correcting problems quickly and efficiently. Like it or not, your reliability may suffer due to a careless sales secretary or absent minded service person, so insist on a high level of performance from everyone who comes in contact with your customers.

#### **Intentions**

At certain times, your relationship may get off track due to some glitch in communication. But if the customer knows your intentions are good. You usually will have a good chance to redeem yourself. Emphasize that their needs come first and you'll do whatever it takes to earn their complete trust and satisfaction

#### **Appearance**

Though appearances can be deceiving, sometimes you can judge a book by its cover. If you drive a clean, late model car, and have a well-groomed, professional appearance, customers will be more than likely to view you as the representative of a reliable, well established publication. Enhance your image further with good posture, a broad vocabulary, a clear voice, and frequent eye contact. The latter says to the customer "you can trust me". The more your customers trust you, the greater the odds that your profitable relationship with them will last a long time.



## Ad-Libs by John Foust

### Advertiser's Blind Spots

When we learned how to drive, we heard about blind spots. Those are the areas which are not visible in our rear and side view mirrors. As a result, we have to be extra careful when we change lanes.

The term "blind spots" has become popular in today's business environment. It refers to significant things that are not acknowledged or given fair consideration by management. Outside observers are often perplexed by the fact that certain obvious factors are always ignored.

Blind spots are common in the advertising business. Let's take a look at a few examples:

**1. Family.** This can be a big blind spot in family-owned businesses. It's a clear sign if you hear something like, "My grandfather wrote our ad slogan, and if it was good enough for him, it's good enough for me." Or, "My son just finished a marketing class, and he's got some good ad ideas." Or, "My niece says we need to have a bigger presence on social media."

**2. Do-it-yourself mentality.** A lot of entrepreneurs and Mom-and-Pop businesses are used to doing just about everything themselves. They don't like to delegate tasks and they resist outside help. They hire and fire, they set office policies, they select inventories, and they keep their own books.

They also maintain tight control of their marketing. In their minds, no one could know more about promoting their businesses than they do.

**3. Competitor distractions.** Someone told me about his experience in working for a furniture manufacturer. His company suddenly started losing orders, because a competing company was dramatically cutting prices. His CEO called an all-staff meeting and announced that their new focus was to beat the competitor at their own game. "From that point on," he said, "it was like Captain Ahab going after Moby Dick. But along the way, we lost our focus on quality, which had been our big selling point. It was like the CEO became blind to what we had going for us all along. It took a while to regain our balance in the market."

Some advertisers make the same mistake. They spend so much time thinking about their competitors that they lose sight of what differentiates them in the marketplace.

**4. History.** We're all products of our past experiences. It should be no surprise when we encounter otherwise savvy business people who are wedded to old media choices – or old ad campaigns – even if those choices are no longer producing results. There may be long-standing relationships with those media outlets. Or there may be a bias against a particular newspaper or newspapers in general.

Blind spots are real, but not necessarily fatal for an ad campaign. After all, we have blind spots, too – and some of them involve our perspectives on advertising.

How should you handle an advertiser with a blind spot that is blocking the way? A good place to start is to look for common ground and bite your tongue if you are tempted to criticize.

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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)

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Permalink: <https://www.mfcp.org/paperclips-newsletter/>



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