



Presidents Corner



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Did someone say CONFERENCE??

Time is ticking as the deadline for registration is quickly approaching. The ACP/MFCP Conference & Trade Show to be held in Des Moines, Iowa will be one you will not want to miss!! Join us September 16 & 17 for one of the best training and networking events in the industry. This event is not just for Publishers and Sales. Bring your entire staff! There will be something for everyone!

The deadline to register is August 28th, 2021. However, if you register before the end of day August 20th, you will be entered into a drawing that will pay for two free room nights. Couple that with the fact that MFCP will pay one registration fee (\$199) for each member to attend the joint conference and you could be going for free! So, hurry and register – the clock is ticking! Here's a link to the registration page:

<https://www.communitypublishers.com/in-person>

Normally, this would be the part of my article where I would say “hope to see you there”. However, it is with mixed emotions that I am announcing my resignation from the MFCP Board of Directors. I have

accepted a new employment opportunity outside of the industry. While I am excited about the opportunities that await me in the future, it is with sadness that I say good-bye. I will cherish the many friendships I have made along the way and to all of those who have encouraged me to “step outside of the box”, I thank you. I will always be grateful for the opportunities I had to work with you and learn from you. I hope our paths cross again in the future.

Again, thank you for the many memories I will take along with me on my new journey.

Sincerely,

Jodi Peterson

“How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard.” ~Winnie The Pooh

From the office...

There is a lot to share with you this month. *So, please read to the end of this column to ensure you don't miss anything important!*



Lee

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#1) FREE CONFERENCE ROOMS – (maybe!!) The conference committee just authorized two free room nights for one lucky MFCP member. Here's how it works. Sign up by end of day August 20th for

the ACP/MFCP Joint Conference (September 17th-18th) and you are automatically entered into a drawing for two free room nights. That's pretty easy! Click here to be taken to the conference registration page: <https://www.communitypublishers.com/in-person>

#2) POSTAL DISCOUNT – 2%. The USPS has another discount program that you may be interested in. It started August 1st and runs through the end of the year. Many of you are using the previous program they offered that has a run date of March 1, 2021 through August 30th, 2021. You cannot run two programs at the same time – but can stop the first and start the second program whenever you wish. There's a lot of info about that program here. Click to read more! <http://www.mfcp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/2021-Act-now-to-reduce-your-postal-bill-2.pdf>

#3) IDEA EXCHANGE – one of my favorite parts of conference is the 3-minute idea exchange. I always walked away with at least one idea that more than paid for my trip. And, because I often entered, I also often walked away with some serious cash! This year the conference committee has set aside \$500 for the 1st place idea, \$250 for 2nd and \$100 for third. Enter your idea today and let's show the rest of the nation what MFCP members have got! Click here for a link to the entry form: [Download “SurvivorIdeaExchangeForm.pdf”](#)

#4) T-SHIRT DESIGN CONTEST – Be sure your graphics people know about the T-Shirt design contest that is being offered for the conference. The winning designer will receive \$100, a free t-shirt and, of course, bragging rights. Click here for more info: [Download “2021 Conference Shirt Design Ad.pdf”](#)

#5) GRAPHICS TRACK AT CONFERENCE: – We're pleased to announce that the joint ACP/MFCP conference is featuring two days of graphics training. All sessions will be led by Kevin Slimp. There are four sessions on Friday and three on Saturday. The session titles and descriptions are as follows:

- *Creating Better Ads to Increase Effectiveness and Revenue*
- *Help! I Don't Know What to Do About this Problem!*
- *Photoshop Tools & Tips –*
- *Photoshop: Getting Pics to Print as Good as They Can – plus a few tools you didn't know about*
- *Tables, Scripts and Data in InDesign: Who Knew?*
- *Getting People to Pick Up Your Paper*
- *Graphics Roundtable – Bring your topics*

#6) EARLY ARRIVALS TO CONFERENCE: For anyone arriving early for conference here are a couple things you'll want to know about:

- There is a management track session being offered all day Thursday. It is entitled Creative Leadership and is being taught by Career Track. Certainly, something you'll want to look into if you are hoping to motivate and re-energize your team.
- After a long day it's kind of nice to be able to unwind with friends. You can do just that at the Summer Stir. Join us as we wander through Des Moines enjoying signature drinks at various establishments located in the Court District. The cost of the event is \$20 per person. However, our good friend Shane Goodman has offered to cover the cost of the event for the first 100 people. Better click this link to find out more! [Download "Summer Stir – Court District.pdf"](#)

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#7) LAST BUT CERTAINLY NOT LEAST: We are having another **Publisher's Roundtable** next week Thursday at 10AM. The topic is going to be on all things eblast related. We have a few industry experts that are set to explain the importance of using them and how to be successful with them. You won't want to miss this call. Held via Zoom. Here's the sign-in info:

Join Zoom Meeting

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

Meeting ID: 895 3672 7860

Passcode: 626106

Dial by your location

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

That's it for now! Now I'm turning my attention back to getting ready for the September conference. I sure hope to see you there!

Bob Berting Article



Ways publishers mismanage their sales teams

By Bob Berting, Berting Communications

Publishers face many challenges today that didn't even exist 5 years ago. But before blaming all your revenue woes on the Pandemic, Facebook and Google, you need to ask yourself if you're really managing your salespeople properly. This means hiring well qualified people, getting them out of their comfort zone, and creating accountability. Maybe, in the final analysis, it's not the economy, the competition, or the market—maybe it's you.

Here are statements from publishers that reveal the weaknesses they need to overcome:

We aren't currently interviewing for salespeople

Interviewing for salespeople is ongoing. Keep the channels open. If you are shorthanded and lose a salesperson, you scramble and compromise on the next hire. Then the slippery slope of sales doom continues. You need to be in control with enough salespeople.

Business is slow so we're not replacing salespeople

Business will continue to be off as long as you allow your sales staff to do “less sales with more salespeople”. The challenge is to do “more sales with less salespeople”. Your salespeople are not paid to be order takers—you pay them to function as expert advisor consultants and to close business.

Salespeople are going on 5-6 new business calls a week

It's not surprising business revenue is off! Every salesperson should be shooting for at least 15 new business calls a week—averaging 3 calls per day. This goal is attainable even when they have the obligation to obviously service regular account business they have already sold.

Our salespeople sell a lot of special promotions

Customers who have an agreement to run a long range campaign to tell the story of their business are sometimes frustrated by the constant and excessive special promotions the publication bombard them with, just so the publication can make more revenue. This is on top of the revenue already committed for the campaign they have agreed to run. This extra pressure many times can hurt the image of the salesperson—and can change their role from counselor/consultant to an order taker pushing the customer constantly for more advertising.

Bob Berting's new e-book #4 for advertising salespeople

Bob is the author of 4 best-selling e-books for the newspaper industry Bob's newest e-book "Smart Customer Connections For Advertising Salespeople" is a publication that is very relative and helpful for print media salespeople dealing with their customers in today's CoronaVirus atmosphere. You can order any of Bob's books on his website: www.bobberting.com.

Read Bob's e-books and discover how his vast experience and know-how can help you achieve much more business for you and your publication. You'll greatly benefit from the wisdom of one of America's top advertising sales experts.

Bob is a professional speaker, advertising sales trainer, publisher marketing consultant, and leading columnist in many national and regional newspaper trade association publications. He is the President of Berting Communications and can be reached at bob@bobberting.com or 317-849-5408.

Ad-Libs by John Foust

Give your advertising some personality



John Foust, Raleigh, NC

Kirk likes to work directly with his ad clients on their creative strategies. "Making a sale is just the first step in the journey," he said. "It's a big part of my job to make sure my clients stand out from their

competitors on the page and on the screen. When I work with several advertisers who are in the same type of business, it's a special challenge to create a different ad personality for each one of them."

Generally speaking, there are two types of advertising. There are image ads that are designed to give consumers a good feeling about the advertiser (for example, "Your safety is our biggest concern"). And there are response ads that are designed to move readers to take action ("Buy one, get one free").

Kirk is on target in his comments about personality. Whether image or response – whether print or digital – every ad has some kind of personality. Instead of leaving that important advertising ingredient to chance, he is determined to help them develop ad personalities that appeal to their respective target audiences.

Let's take a look at a few of the tools which can contribute to an ad's personality – the type of personality that a client wants to project:

1. **Typography.** When we speak, it's not just *what* we say, it's *how* we say it that communicates a message. It's the same on the newspaper page or the digital screen, so much so that typography has been called "the voice of print."

From a bold, sans serif headline for a construction equipment distributor to a lighter serif headline for an upscale clothing store, type fonts can create important first impressions.

2. **Photographs vs. Illustrations.** To depict realism, use a photograph. Photos are usually more true-to-life than drawings. Even if a photo has been touched up, consumers are willing to accept it as a reasonable representation of the subject matter.

Although some illustrations can be as realistic as photographs (consider close-cropped, photo-like depictions of tires), most illustrations leave more to the imagination than that. There are a number of choices, including pen and ink, gray tones, charcoal, watercolors and cartoons.

3. **Products vs. people.** Three possible options are: products by themselves, people by themselves or people using the products. In other words, an ad can depict a widget, people (in posed or candid shots), or a person using a widget.

4. **Copy style.** Some advertisers present information in a straight-forward pattern that reads something like this: "(1) feature-benefit, (2) feature-benefit, (3) feature-benefit, (4) buy today."

Others like to tell – or imply – a story. For example: “Imagine getting yard work done quickly, so you’ll have the rest of the day for fun.”

“There are lots of creative options and combinations that give us ways to customize ads for our clients,” Kirk said. “Even if they sell the best products in the world, nobody will read their ads unless they attract attention on the page. That’s why the sale is only the beginning of the process.”

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John Foust has conducted training programs for thousands of newspaper advertising professionals. Many ad departments are using his training videos to save time and get quick results from in-house training. E-mail for information: john@johnfoust.com

Kevin Slimp



by Kevin Slimp
kevin@kevinslimp.com

Preparing for Problems

Limiting issues that pose threats to our deadlines

Assuming COVID-19 doesn’t rear its ugly head over the next few weeks in such a way that groups curtail travel and in-person meetings, I will be making my first trip to speak at a newspaper convention

since March 2020. Interestingly, I will be returning to the place where I last appeared at a live conference just days before last year's lockdown began. Frankly, I'm excited.

The big question on my mind is, "What should I speak about in Des Moines?" While the pandemic effectively shut down speaking opportunities for a few months, by late fall 2020, groups were assembling online, virtual conferences. Negating the necessity to travel, I found myself speaking at sometimes four or five newspaper conventions in a week. Sometimes, I would speak at two on the same day. Having appeared virtually to so many groups, there's a danger that folks have heard my most popular topics at one of these virtual meetings.

Again, I ask myself, "What should I speak about in Des Moines." Thankfully, coming up with new topics is a skill I perfected long ago. After considerable thought, I suggested a list of topics to cover during my two days in Des Moines. My favorite is, "*Help! I Don't Know What to Do About this Problem!*"

I'm not sure if it's a series of coincidences or if newspapers are just a lot busier than they've been for a while. Whatever the reason, I've fielded considerably more calls about deadline-defying problems at papers over the past few weeks. I'm not talking about your run-of-the-mill issues. It seems that almost daily, a publisher has called with an issue that was going to force their paper to miss deadline. Some have even worried about – heaven forbid – running a day late.

So, I will be speaking – at least for an hour – about fixing problems, which brings me to my bit of advice for this column. While most recent calls about problems have forced me to scratch my head before coming up with a solution, we can limit issues that pose threats to our deadlines. Here are a few:

- Take advantage of training opportunities: Whether in-person or online, be aware of seminars, classes, and webinars offered by associations and other groups. Even the smallest papers will benefit from regular training. Before the pandemic, dozens of small community papers throughout the U.S. and Canada would invite me to work with their staff every two or three years. During the pandemic, this number increased as folks realized it was easier and less expensive to get training designed specifically for their needs.
- Keep hardware and software up to date: With the advent of Adobe's Creative Cloud software, it has become more common for newspapers and other designers to have the latest version of

productions software. In addition, we must make certain other software applications not related to production haven't become outdated. I've noticed newspapers have gotten better at keeping hardware up to date. I can remember a time not too long ago when it was common to visit newspapers using computers that had been in use ten years or more. It's obvious we've learned that "time is money." Not only will updated software and hardware speed production, but I'll be receiving fewer frantic calls from papers in fear of missing deadlines.

- Stay on top of news related to technology: Who knows what new program or gadget will improve our ability to get our papers out? Hold regular conversations at staff meetings about technology. What needs updating? What isn't working? What have you heard about that could help our paper?

I received an email today from a former student who has attended dozens of my classes over the years. She wanted me to know that something she learned in my class a few years ago kept her paper from a "near-death experience" this week. Information is a powerful thing. Be aware of what is working well – and what isn't working well – at your operation and take steps now that might just save your paper in the future.

In Memory of Max Heath

Most readers have heard by now of the passing of Max Heath. Max and I became quick friends when I entered the speaking world, and very few folks in the newspaper and magazine worlds are unfamiliar with his work. I got to know the humorous side of Max, whose dry wit often left me in stitches.

My favorite Max Heath quote happened five or six years ago, as we stood in the vendors' area of a convention in Denver while a famous speaker was in the next room giving a keynote. I asked Max if he was going in to hear the speaker. His response: "Kevin, I've heard the wind blow before." I cracked up because Max was so right.

Every time you mail your publication at a discounted rate, be sure to thank Max Heath.



Think Like a Doctor to Sell More Ads

By Ryan Dohrn

Every single sales call with an advertiser is valuable. So valuable that you do not want to waste time asking questions that will not help you close the deal. After 30 years of selling and marketing media, I find that you have three to five questions, and that is about it, on every sales call. More than that and you might as well turn on a bright light and point it into your advertiser's eyes and take the interrogation to the next level. I am kidding, of course. The issue is that many media sales warriors have been misled to ask the wrong

questions. When you first start your training as a salesperson, there is usually a conversation about asking the three critical sales questions that are core to your success. Those three questions normally include the following: Are they the person that can make advertising decisions? What marketing are you currently doing? What is your budget for marketing? But what if I told you that I deeply believe that these are not the best questions to ask on a media sales call? Would you read on? Or would you roll your eyes? Well, thanks for reading on because I feel we need to sell differently, now more than ever before. In previous blogs, I have stated that if we keep selling traditional media in traditional ways, we are destined to get traditional results. So, what can we do to be bigger, badder, and better in the media ad sales business? I believe it starts with reformatting the questions we ask. I deeply feel that we all need to think like a doctor and not like a salesperson.

Consider this: you go to the doctor looking for relief from some type of ailment. They will normally ask you these three questions. What is causing you pain? How long has this been a problem? What have you done so far to fix the pain? If we can be in the business of removing pain, like a doctor, we have a repeatable pattern for ad sales success. Let's start with the old questions and move to the prescription for success.

Do we need to know if the person is the decision-maker? Of course. But, if we only meet with decision-makers, we will not have enough meetings to get to our sales goal. In addition, in the media business, we are working with a different buying structure compared to "normal" companies. Unlike a copier salesperson, we are working with marketing directors or business owners. Both are in a unique position, unlike an acquisition clerk at a standard company, to make decisions or highly influence decisions. There are normally not many layers to get to a marketing decision. So I suggest that we swap this question out for a new one. Keep reading, it is coming up.

Do we need to know what marketing they are currently doing? Of course. That helps immensely. But, this question leads the advertiser to hijack your sales call and talk about the other things they are doing. You have just invited them to talk about your competition on your sales call. There is a better way to handle this question and get the answer that you need to move your ball down the field towards a

touchdown. We need this answer, but we should ask it in a different way. So, I suggest that we swap out this question for a new one.

Keep reading, it is coming up.

Do we need to know their budget? Of course. But how many times have you been given an accurate answer? How many times have you been told, there is no budget? Asking an advertiser their budget forces you to live in their often unrealistic reality of what it takes to market their product or service to your readers. You are asking them to force you into their reality instead of guiding them to the actual reality of what it takes to have a presence, be competitive, or dominate the pages of your publication or website. Asking for budget without showing them the reality of marketing is a waste of a question. Again, we need this answer. But I suggest that we swap out this question for a new one. Keep reading, it is coming up.

When it comes times to asking questions of an advertiser, I have a proven three-step process that has worked over and over again. I truly feel it is the prescription for getting the answers we need and for closing deals. It will probably sound like just what the doctor ordered. So, what is your biggest problem or pain point? How long has that problem been painful? And, what have you done to fix that problem or alleviate that pain? Let's expand on this three-step process of questions, right now.

Question #1: I like to ask, when you agreed to meet with me today, what is the one business challenge or point of pain that you think I can help you solve? This helps the advertiser get specific with you. It allows you to provide them with specific solutions to specific problems. This helps you get clear on their points of pain. They may have one or they may have five. Ask them to get clear with you, and take notes. Sympathize with them. Tell them they are not alone. Reference that you have heard this pain point before and have some ideas to help. Once you know their pain, now you want to enhance the pain ... just a touch.

Question #2: Pain is a real motivator in problem-solving and customer relations. If you can be seen as the person or company that removes the pain points a business owner is facing, your secret media elixir will sell like wildfire. After I ask and identify their pain points, I will ask this simple question: "How long has this been a problem?" Normally, the answer surprises me. I am trying to enhance the pain. I want to make it very real for them, especially if they have been advertising with a competitor for years. I want them to subtly realize that they have been advertising elsewhere and this darn problem still exists. I am not looking to make them feel dumb, however. I just want them to see that they still have the pain point and they do not like the pain. Once the pain is real, I dig just a bit deeper by asking my third question.

Question #3: What have you done to fix this problem? I might even ask how much money they have spent to try and fix the issue. Oh wait, did I just ask their budget? Well ... sort of. I want to enhance the fact that they have spent money and time and the problem still exists. Again, sympathize with them. Tell them they are not alone. Reference that you have heard this pain before and have some ideas to help.

Your doctor does the same thing when you come to their office. Right? What is the problem? How long has this been a problem? What have you done so far to fix the pain? If we can be in the business of removing pain, we have a repeatable pattern for ad sales success.

Now, I am not suggesting that these are the only questions you should ask. If you read this blog often, you know that there are many other questions to ask. I am simply suggesting that we have limited time on that single valuable sales call, and we want to ask the best questions to get the best results. The other

thing is that there are so many age-old sales questions that make us sound like every other media salesperson. In most markets, the questions that you ask will set you apart from the other salespeople that are calling on your same clients. Do you believe that questions separate you from others? The answer is yes.

Two final points. If we keep selling traditional media in traditional ways, we are destined to get traditional results. So let's change a bit. And remember, if ad sales was an easy job, everyone would be doing it. We are the chosen few. Let's always be looking to improve our media sales game.

Get out there.... Ryan

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*.

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