

"Circulation turnover points up the fact that the paper doesn't sell itself, although some of us editors like to think so. Somebody has to sell it. No editor is genius enough to provide a steady, guaranteed audience through his own efforts."

— LEE HILLS,
Executive Editor,
Detroit, Mich.,
Free Press

CHAPTER 9

Selling the Newspaper

NEWSPAPER SELLING is based on two principles used in successful selling of any product: The salesman must have complete understanding of every detail of the product to be sold and how it will benefit the purchaser; and plans must be formulated to use proven methods, wisely adapted to specific situations.

SALESMEN MUST KNOW THEIR PRODUCT

The newspaper is a package of varied features and services. When you sell it, you sell: (1) information, (2) discussion, (3) entertainment, (4) promotion, (5) consumer buying assistance, and (6) community pride and interest.

John Scott Davenport contends that when you sell a newspaper you are not selling comics, an editorial policy or a wad of paper with printing on it that can be used to wrap garbage but what you are selling is news-editorial content.¹ Topping the list of all that a newspaper contains, of course, is general information concerning happenings in the reader's world of interest. Circulation salesmen sometimes slide away from this important emphasis to call attention to a series of feature articles on movie stars or home-run artists, a new comic or a special premium offered with a new subscription. At a convention of the National Newspaper Promotion Association in St. Paul, William P. Steven, executive editor of the Minneapolis *Star and Tribune* (combined circulation 497,784, population 521,718) chided circula-

¹ John Scott Davenport, *Newspaper Circulation — Backbone of the Industry*, Wm. C. Brown Co., Dubuque, Iowa, p. 57.

tion managers "who have more confidence in jackknives for carriers than they have in news and features to sell papers."

Sell News and Editorial Comment

Unless a circulation salesman can sell his newspaper on its coverage of news, he will, most likely, waste his time in trying to sell it on its features or whatever else it contains. The latter are good sales arguments but they are subsidiary to news. Salesmen lose prestige for their newspaper and for themselves when they fail to emphasize its news-giving qualities.

"The quality of your product will do more to sell your newspaper than circulation efforts," says Don Hardy, publisher of the Canon City, Colo., *Daily Record* (circulation 3,987, population 6,345). "We have found that thorough local news coverage with pictorial play-up has done much to increase the effectiveness of carrier solicitation."

The Newton, N. J., *New Jersey Herald* (circulation 10,747, population 5,781) a progressive weekly, tripled its circulation in ten years despite the competition of New York dailies published no more than 50 miles away, mainly by thorough coverage of local news.

"We have news and advertising competition from a local radio station and advertising competition from a shopping guide, but we do not think that they pose any serious threat to our circulation," says Marlin S. Morgan, the publisher. "Daily papers from New York and Newark circulate in our county. They carry the big news, but the local readers still want the local news (weddings, births, clubs, schools, etc.), which the city papers do not touch. In this respect we have the advantage over the city papers and the radio."

While news ranks highest among all that a newspaper has to offer, editorial comment on happenings and problems also is an important drawing card. All subscribers do not read the editorial page but those who do usually are deeply interested and become staunch friends and supporters of the newspaper. They may sternly take issue with the editor on some subjects but this usually heightens their interest and increases the publisher-reader contact.

Among editors who sense the value of a good editorial page in building circulation is John M. McClelland of the Longview-Kelso, Wash., *Daily News* (circulation 17,526, population 27,684). He says: "Giving attention to editorials is good business. We have had subscribers tell our collectors out on the motor routes that they take the paper just to read the editorials. Of course, we don't kid ourselves into believing that all our subscribers read our editorials regularly. Perhaps less than 50 per cent of them do. Nevertheless, we believe that readers have more respect for a paper and value it more highly when there are editorial comments available for them

to read." Sound editorials on current subjects, especially when they pertain to local problems, help to sell newspapers.

Weekly newspapers that have eliminated the editorial page have made a great mistake, in the opinion of Bill Wilmot, publisher of the Colfax, Wash., *Gazette-Commoner* (circulation 3,805, population 3,057). "People are naturally interested in what the editor thinks about a certain situation, even though they may not agree with him," he says. "Many times people rely on the editor for a little guidance through the editorial column."

Features Are Popular

Features which entertain also help greatly in circulation development. Newspaper syndicates produce features that appeal to every interest and there is strong competition between newspapers for the best of their offerings. But a newspaper's own staff may develop features with a greater local appeal than those supplied by syndicates.

"We have a continuous program for development and purchase of good special features around which circulation can build its sales drives," says Lee Hills, executive editor of the Detroit, Mich., *Free Press* (circulation 456,768, population 1,849,568). "We get revised lists of cities showing where each edition goes so that a story for Lansing goes to Lansing and one for Saginaw goes to Saginaw. The circulation department lets us know of sensitive areas and areas where it is putting on extra effort. We step up coverage there, and hunt for features of special interest to those people."

The average newspaper also promotes sports and various forms of amusement and the space given to this is tremendous. Some years ago Opinion Research Surveys, Inc., of Princeton, N. J., was asked to conduct a poll to ascertain reader interest in sports pages. It was determined that 30 years ago, 18 per cent of a newspaper's readers followed the sports pages, 20 years ago that percentage had mounted to 30 per cent and during the last 30 years it has soared to 55 per cent, topped only by the comics and Page One. Publishers sometimes feel that they are either giving too much space to sports or they should receive some recompense for the advertising and promotion. Not to be overlooked, however, is the reader interest and increased circulation brought about by sports coverage. All that is needed to prove this is to leave out the box scores for a single day. The reaction would be convincing.

Pictures Catch the Eye

Weeklies and small dailies, along with metropolitan papers, sense the value of pictures that illustrate news and features and allow them liberal space. Practically every small newspaper today has one or more reporters who know how to use a camera, and the large papers

have a staff of news photographers. Engraving equipment is found in small as well as large plants. Attractive newspaper cuts are produced inexpensively by the Fairchild Scan-a-Graver and other modern devices.

Wonderful picture subjects live in every town, regardless of size. In their interesting book, *1,000 Ideas for Better News Pictures*,² Hugh Sidey of *Life Magazine* and Rodney Fox, professor of journalism at Iowa State College, encourage the use of pictures by newspapers in small communities:

A picture you take of something for your newspaper has all the human appeal that a picture of a human being has for readers of a metropolitan paper, plus the big extra value that comes because your pictures are of friends, neighbors or, at least, acquaintances. Children in your town are every bit as cute as city children, and chances are that the situations in which you photograph your town's younger generation are a lot more wholesome and satisfying than those pictured in the urban press. You have the beautiful aged persons, white-haired, their faces rich with the lines achieved by their living . . . you have, in fact, all sorts of interesting people for the lens of your camera.

The metropolitan press is giving more attention to pictures than ever before. Color printing and wire photo are now being used extensively. Better pictures are as much a part of progressive journalism as better reporting, and they are yielding a rich return in stepped up readership.

Ads Offer Savings

Another valuable service given by newspapers is assistance in buying through their advertising columns. People buy the paper to see what is offered at the stores, what may be bought or traded for in the homes, what entertainment is available at the movie houses, on television and the radio, and what real estate or livestock is offered at auction. The classified pages of some newspapers draw greater reader attention than the editorial page.

Stimulates Community Pride

But the solicitor sells even more than news, editorial comment, features, promotion and advertising when he sells the newspaper. Beyond that, on the intangible side, is information that gives the reader an understanding of community needs and opportunities that should stimulate a desire to cooperate with other citizens in making the community better. Whether he is aware of it or not, the reader buys with the newspaper the opportunity to become a

² Hugh Sidey and Rodney Fox, *1000 Ideas for Better News Pictures*, Iowa State College Press, Ames, Iowa, 1956, p. 24.

more vital part of his community. The newspaper that keeps the subscriber informed concerning what is going on in his town is stimulating his interest, increasing his knowledge of local affairs and strengthening his desire to increase the merits of his home town.

"The main story we have to tell is that of the simple life, the importance of church and school in our town, state, and nation," says Dwight Payton, publisher of the Overbrook, Kans., *Citizen* (circulation 775, population 387). "It is our belief that something which made this nation great is still to be found in the rural areas." The circulation of this newspaper is small but its coverage is great — approximately 800 in a township with a population under 1,000.

The newspaper presenting information and comment which contribute to a better understanding of human relations is a stimulus to good citizenship. "People who read the newspapers are 'better citizens,'" says Lee Hills, executive editor of the Detroit, Mich., *Free Press*. There is a strong feeling among good citizens that reading a newspaper is a duty.

SUCCESSFUL SALES METHODS ARE VARIED

Ten means, at least, may be employed effectively in selling newspaper subscriptions:

1. Special solicitors or regularly employed salesmen.
2. Carriers.
3. Various members of the newspaper staff.
4. Community groups who will work for premiums or contest prizes.
5. Mail.
6. Telephone.
7. Radio and television.
8. "Silent salesmen": honor boxes and vending machines.
9. Street salesmen.
10. Promotional campaigns and contests.

Full-time Salesmen Do Good Work

Some newspapers employ full-time salesmen, who work in areas where circulation building is particularly needed and at times when the prospects are most likely to be responsive. These are supervised by a man who knows the field to be covered, the type of sales promotion needed, and who has the personality and the salesmanship to stir to action the men under him. Usually on the large papers each salesman is put through a training course before he is sent into the field. On the smaller papers he is left pretty much to his own resources for producing results.

These salesmen direct their main efforts toward obtaining new subscriptions although they gather in renewals along the way. Usually they work on a base pay to cover expenses plus a commission, usually 50 per cent for new subscriptions and 25 per cent for renewals. The rate depends upon the difficulties to be met in reaching and persuading prospects. The publisher wants subscribers and usually will pay what is necessary to bring results. One publisher pays 70 per cent on new subscriptions and 40 per cent on renewals. In addition, he pays 75 cents for each order accompanied by full remittance or official company purchase order. He has set up also a quarterly bonus system, which provides additional bonuses to bring certain top-category subscriptions over the 100 per cent mark, providing the salesman meets the quota assigned to him.

"This bonus is not just a phony cover-up to enable us to pay the men high commissions," the publisher says. "It is a genuine quota allotment based on our needs and on reasonable expectations that the men can meet them. We have several restrictions on the type of subscriptions on which we will not pay bonus or commission. We also have heavy deductions from salesmen's paychecks for subscriptions misrepresented or misclassified in order to qualify for higher commission and for unauthorized subscriptions."

Setting up goals for salesmen is a strong incentive for intensive solicitation. Each salesman in the organization may be given a quota of new subscriptions to be obtained in a limited time, or a long-time selling goal may be set for the entire department.

In its 1955 plans for selling, the Jacksonville, Fla., *Florida Times-Union* (circulation 142,257, population 204,517) looked ten years ahead. F. P. Turner, circulation manager, set before his salesmen a chart, showing the growth in city, state and total circulation from 1950 to 1955 and indicated what he expected it to be in the next 10-year period (see Fig. 9.1). Undoubtedly, the result of each year's selling will be checked against it to see how nearly the forecast holds. Salesmen will not easily be satisfied until the prediction of each year is fulfilled.

MORE EFFECTIVE IN RURAL DISTRICTS

Full-time salesmen are used more in the rural districts to supplement mail solicitation than in the city and suburban areas where carriers are relied upon to obtain subscriptions. However, the Somerville, N. J., *Messenger-Gazette* (circulation 8,610, population 11,571), a weekly newspaper with practically all its circulation served by carriers and newsstands, employs house-to-house solicitors, who regularly put in 40 hours a week. Sample copies are delivered to homes of prospects and soon afterward salesmen appear to receive orders. This is a good way to build circulation, but it sometimes

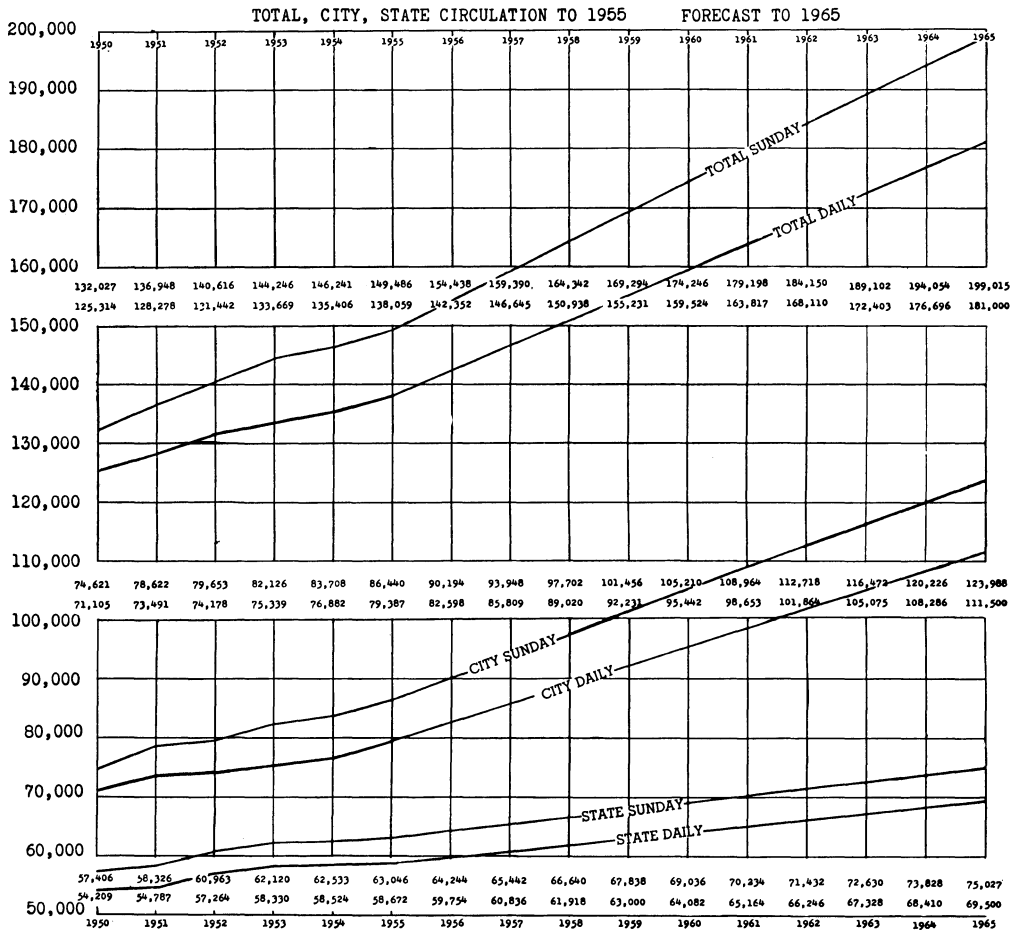


FIG. 9.1 — Sales chart of the Jacksonville, Fla., **Florida Times-Union**, showing circulation growth from 1950 to 1955 and forecast of circulation each succeeding year to 1965.

is a problem to find men or women with ability who are willing to engage in house-to-house selling.

Small dailies and weeklies have found salesmen very useful in building circulation with farmers. Such salesmen usually are persons who have lived long in the community and are well known. The publisher of a good weekly newspaper relates his experience with rural salesmen in this way: "I've lived in a small town the most of my life and I've hired many a good subscription salesman, and they nearly always lived right under my nose. A 60-year-old former street-car conductor who had retired to our town, for example, was a

natural. He needed extra money, liked people, and enjoyed the work. Another man, 43, had been a store clerk and he needed work in the open air. You're almost sure to find such people if you look hard enough."

Most newspapers with a large rural circulation carry a weekly farm page, with items of special interest to farmers. *Circulation Management*³ presents this plan to make the farm page profitable in cold dollars and cents:

- Step 1.* Do what has been described above—select a salesman from the home community.
- Step 2.* Get a large-scale map of the town's trade territory, showing all the roads and mail routes, so that the salesman can plan daily trips covering specific areas and in the final stage reach every home in the county.
- Step 3.* Tell the salesman to go out and sell subscriptions, a neighborhood at a time, and while doing so to gather news and human interest material for the farm page.
- Step 4.* Teach the man how to sell subscriptions and gather news.
- Step 5.* Allow the salesman to make a special rate to new subscribers as a way of introducing the paper to them. Otherwise the woman of the home will want to talk it over with her husband before giving an order, and the man will want to think it over and let you know later. A "special" in the nature of a few extra issues or a premium overcomes this procrastination.

The personal touch counts for a lot with the American farmer. A salesman, who knows by long experience, once told a group of circulation men: "Don't canvass your rural routes with the expectation of listing every farmer on the first trip out. If he refuses to subscribe, lead him around to the hog shed, ask him a few questions about the hogs and what he feeds them, make an item of what he tells you for the next issue, mail him a marked copy, and then in a few weeks call again if he doesn't visit the office in the meantime to subscribe. Cultivate his friendship."

ENTICING FIELD FOR RIGHT MAN

When a man with the knack of meeting people pleasantly is given free way in a newspaper's circulation field, he is generally happy with his work and will stay a long time with the newspaper that employs him. The average length of service for full-time solicitors on the Waterloo, Iowa, *Courier* (circulation 49,088, population 65,198) has been 19 years, according to Hugh Patterson, circulation manager.

"An exchange of ideas and experiences between our solicitors has been helpful in keeping them on the job," Patterson explains. "At least twice each year they gather at our office for a meeting where

³ *Circulation Management*, June, 1952, pp. 22-23.

they bring their problems of a general nature into group discussion. A question posed by one man often will be answered by another solicitor who has encountered and overcome the same problem. After our general discussion we get more specific, and point to towns that are not keeping pace with the group. Later we invite our managing editor into the meeting to handle questions pertaining to news coverage. This tends to clear up any misunderstandings that may prevail and, in addition, it gives us another opportunity to instruct our men in the product they are selling."

Patterson emphasizes the value of keeping salesmen well informed concerning the number of subscribers in the area they are working. Each day the clerks in the circulation department mimeograph an information sheet, on which are listed the following items: (1) names and addresses of all mail starts for that day with the expiration date of each start; (2) names, addresses and new expiration dates for all who had renewed subscriptions on that day; (3) names and addresses of all subscribers whose subscriptions will expire one week hence; and (4) names and addresses of all stops for that day. Each solicitor receives this daily report and if the expiration dates appear to be in error, he immediately tells the office and thus often saves the circulation department some embarrassment. This helps to avoid those unpleasant situations caused by mistakes in record keeping.

SOLICITATION IN SPECIFIC AREAS

Not all newspapers employ full-time salesmen, many put on a part-time man to make a thorough canvass of a certain territory, requiring only a few months, perhaps. The LaFollette, Tenn., *Press* (circulation 3,731, population 5,797) employs a school teacher to sell subscriptions in the rural districts during the interschool period. Such salesmen, however, will not accomplish as much as a full-time man who has had time to develop the acquaintance and confidence of the people in the community.

Solicitation in definite areas bears fruit when the newspaper gives special attention in its news columns to those areas. The Beaver-Rochester, Pa., *Beaver Valley Times* (circulation 21,378, population 13,557) has made of itself a local newspaper for all sections of the county by printing editions for three different areas. First from the press is the Aliquippa edition, which is circulated in the extreme southwestern quarter of the county; second is the Ambridge edition for the southeastern quarter; and third is the Beaver edition for the rest of the county. General news goes into all editions but special news of the area served goes in each neighborhood edition. Thus, each town in the county feels that the *Beaver Valley Times* is its

home-town newspaper and circulation work becomes easier at all points. The circulation department persistently adds to the subscription list by well-planned solicitation.

Use Carriers in City

Residents of the city are more easily induced to become regular subscribers. They are nearer to the newspaper, and the newspaper more closely touches their interests through its news and advertising columns. Effort expended in this veritable mine of selling opportunities usually brings prompt returns.

A circulation department, however, cannot let matters drift along in this fertile area. Carriers, who are depended upon largely to do the selling, must know how to make the right approach, arouse interest, create desire and drive straight for a signature on the dotted line. How these four important steps may be carried out is illustrated in an attractive manual (see Fig. 9.2) issued to carriers by the Dallas, Tex., *News* (circulation 208,067, population 434,462).

The circulation department of the Denver, Colo., *Post* (circulation 254,120, population 415,786) gives to each new carrier or supervisor a bulletin, which contains instructions in ways to overcome the common objections of prospective customers. It even outlines for the carrier that beginning word: "Good evening, Mrs. Blank, I stopped by to see whether anyone has contacted you in regard to subscribing to the *Post*. As long as no one has seen you concerning the paper, I would like to step in a minute to explain the many fine features we have in our paper." Ordinarily a memorized speech is not very satisfactory, but a carrier sometimes needs a pattern to follow.

MUST HAVE CONVINCING SALES TALK

The sales talk then swings into a description of the news coverage and many fine features in the paper, stressing easy-to-read makeup, sports pages, the radio and TV listings, comics, editorial writers, columnists, classified ads, etc. Good carrier service and monthly collections also are described. This part of the sales talk is not too hard for the carrier to present. His troubles start when the customer begins presenting familiar objections. Rod Gentzkow and Myron J. Peterson, field supervisors for the *Post*, presented in *Circulation Management*⁴ the following answers for the most common objections:

Prospect: "I'm taking too many papers and magazines now."

Carrier: "I am sure that you can get most of the news and reading pleasure out of the *Post*, thereby eliminating some of your other papers and magazines and saving money at the same time."

Prospect: "The paper costs too much."

⁴ *Circulation Management*, April, 1955, p. 11.

Carrier: "Our paper costs just a nickel a day and where can you get more value for five cents? In addition, we carry valuable coupons each Thursday, which amount to anywhere from 10c to 40c a week. Our Sunday paper sold separately costs 15c, so by becoming a regular daily and Sunday subscriber, you receive the Sunday paper for only 5c."

Prospect: "I get all the news on the radio or television."

Carrier: "Yes, you do get the highlights of the news, but you fail to get the whole story and facts. I suggest you read the *Post* for details. It will keep you well informed."

Prospect: "I don't have time to read the paper because of television."

Carrier: "You will note that our paper carries a full page devoted exclusively to radio and TV, giving complete program listings. You will also find a convenient television play bill, giving a listing of programs of most interest. The paper is also designed for quick and easy reading, with an index on the front page and many important stories complete on the front page."

Prospect: "I take the local paper and buy the *Post* on Sunday."

Carrier: "We don't feel we are in competition with the local paper, because if we tried to localize our paper, it would be so large it would take a truck to deliver it. We take over where the local paper lets off, as we have the facilities to give you better worldwide coverage of the news, plus a full page of wire photos. You mentioned you took our Sunday paper; for 20c more per week, you can have both the daily and Sunday."

Each of these suggested answers to the prospect's objections is specific. And so are the sales talks. With these as an aid, the carrier soon learns to "ad lib" to meet new situations.

The Modesto, Calif., *Bee* (circulation 32,112, population 17,389) gives similar instruction to its carriers in a colorful sales manual. Some of the answers it offers for stock objections are:

Prospect: "We can't afford it."

Carrier: "You can't afford to be without the *Bee* because: (1) the price of the paper each week can be saved many times over in the purchase of food and clothing advertised in the paper; (2) unused articles you have in your home can be turned into quick cash by advertising them in the classified section; and (3) new and possibly better jobs are advertised constantly in the classified ad columns."

Prospect: "We buy it elsewhere."

Carrier: "Well, why do that when I can deliver it to your home every day and collect for it only once at the end of the month? And in spite of all the extra service of bringing the paper right to your door, my monthly collection is actually less than what you pay when you buy the paper uptown."

For the prospect's "We take another paper," the *Bee* manual warns the carrier: "Do not say anything about another newspaper, but show the good qualities of the *Bee*." And for the more customary "We'll talk it over," the manual suggests: "Usually that is only

FIG. 9.2 — In this manner the right way to obtain a new customer is explained to carriers of the Dallas, Tex., *News*. (Courtesy of the Dallas *News* and the ICMA Official Bulletin.)

The 4 Steps In Making A Sale



The approach

"Good evening Mrs. Smith. I'm Tom Jones, The Dallas News carrier on this route. I deliver The News to many of your neighbors and every time I pass your house, I want to leave you a paper too." Mrs. Smith interrupted to say, "Well, Tom, we're taking one paper now, and"

Arouse interest

"Yes, I know, Mrs. Smith," Tom said, "but I'm new on this route, and if you have a minute, I would like to tell you about The News. I have noticed that there are several people in your family, and The News is designed as a family newspaper. It is printed in several sections to make it convenient for each member to have his favorite part. The first section consists of local, national, and international news and usually the sports page. I know your husband would enjoy reading this section before going to work each morning.

"You would like the women's section. In it, you'll find daily recipes for planning the family meals, home decorations, stories of club meetings, marriages, and other articles written especially for women.

"Then there is the section of local news, business news, and the editorial page and classified ads. The News has many outstanding writers. Among them is Paul Crume who writes The Big D column, appearing on the front page every day except Saturday."



Create desire for The News

"Mrs. Smith, you'll enjoy the convenience of shopping from the bargain ads appearing in The News every day too. You can save many times the subscription price through the use of grocery ads alone." Mrs. Smith interrupted again, "Well, I don't know. We" Without hesitating Tom continued, "Mrs. Smith, I'll deliver The News early every morning. I'll have it on your porch before you're awake. Many of my customers tell me that they just couldn't start the day without The News and their morning cup of coffee. And The News costs so little, too. It costs less than 6¢ a day, including the big Sunday paper." Conversation shifted again at this point but not for long. "Tom, maybe you're right, but"



Close the call

"Mrs. Smith, I know your family would enjoy reading The News if you would just give it a try. How about letting me deliver it to you for just one month? That will give you and your husband an opportunity to judge for yourselves." So, she said, "Well, all right. We'll give it a try." "Gee, thanks, Mrs. Smith. I know you won't be disappointed. Please sign right here and you can look for your News beginning in the morning."



an excuse, but if it is necessary to call back, do so at the time you promise." Additional practical suggestions are: (1) try to learn the prospect's name before calling; (2) take a copy of the paper with you; (3) have order book and pencil; (4) be cheerful; (5) be neat; and (6) always be courteous.

MUST GENERATE ENTHUSIASM

Successful selling of the newspaper to homes depends greatly upon maintaining a high degree of enthusiasm in the carrier organization. This enthusiasm may be generated by: (1) sales meetings, (2) selling campaigns, and (3) prizes, premiums or bonuses. In addition to training and definite instruction, boys need incentives, encouragement and "tips" that will lead them to greater revenue. When selling the newspaper can be made a game and a contest as well as an achievement, carriers throw themselves into their work, really enjoy it, and increase the number of patrons on their routes, which makes money for them while swelling the newspaper's total circulation.

J. R. Hudson, circulation promotion manager for the *Des Moines Register and Tribune* (combined circulation 355,089, population 177,965) believes that carrier meetings are almost useless unless they are filled with surprise and color.

"Such meetings," he says, "should be natural enthusiasm builders. Make meetings short—not more than 15 minutes—and make the session snappy. Give the boys some sales tips but make those tips the kind that will help the boy get inside the house. One of the best carrier salesmen we ever had was a lad who knew it was ten times as hard for a prospect to say 'no' if he got inside the house. All winter long he carried a big pair of overshoes with him. He'd knock on the door, hold his overshoes and say 'Mrs. Smith, I've taken off my overshoes so I won't get your rugs dirty. May I step inside?' That's a sales tip any boy will understand. Let enthusiasm get him up to the door and inside; let your selling aids or selling plans help him get the order, once he's inside; let good service and a good product keep the order, once it is sold."

Ed Mill, circulation director of the Davenport, Iowa, *Democrat and Times* (combined circulation 50,095, population 74,549) suggests the use of visual aids at carrier sales meetings. "Remember," he says, "through the ears, 10 per cent sticks, through the eyes, 20 per cent. You'll be surprised, if you check, the films available, free of cost, to tie in with your campaign."

For one of his carrier meetings Mel Kappler of the Moline, Ill., *Dispatch* (circulation 27,343, population 37,397) clipped features, news, advertising, pictures and comics from one day's paper and pasted them on a big roll of paper, and to impress upon new carriers the immensity of the product they were to sell he released

the massive roll in front of the group. Large flash cards were used also to illustrate salient points in selling, delivering and collecting.

Experience proves that showmanship, humor and novelty make sales meetings interesting and help to generate enthusiasm in the sales organization.

SEASONAL HINTS ARE USEFUL

Hints for selling, tied in with the seasons and with local conditions, help greatly to keep carriers in the selling groove. The Fresno, Calif., *Bee* (circulation 95,552, population 91,669) follows this plan consistently, keeping its carriers working even through the hot summer days with bulletins such as the following:

**THE "DOG DAYS" ARE HERE!
DON'T LET 'EM SLOW YOU DOWN!!**

FUNNY THING about the "Dog Days" of mid-summer! NEWS HAPPENS and TRAVELS just as fast THEN as during any other period of the year! But what happens when it gets to YOU — in each day's completed copy of your Fresno Bee?

DO YOU think more about the temporary discomfort of these hot August days than you do about giving your good route customers the speedy, ON TIME delivery service they expect from you — regardless of the temperature? THE HEAT OF "dog days" will never get you down all by itself. But, you can generate plenty of "HEAT" that will really singe your hair, if you fail to maintain good delivery service to readers all month long!

THERE'S SO MUCH big news breaking every day that every subscriber is anxious to get his copy of the Fresno Bee right on the dot . . . So no matter what the *thermometer* may say, don't act like a floppy eared old hound dog — but like a snappy young business man, who says:

"TO HECK WITH THE 'DOG DAYS' . . . I'M GIVING MY CUSTOMERS RED HOT DELIVERIES."

The Columbus, Ga., *Ledger and Enquirer* (combined circulation 53,964, population 79,611) combat summer slump by getting carriers together early in the evening to solicit picked homes. After about an hour of soliciting, supervised by a district manager, the group goes on a weiner roast. The carriers are paid cash for their orders. This plan appeals to the boy's pride in his newspaper connection and has been unusually effective.

Floyd A. Brown, circulation manager of the Hamilton, Ohio, *Journal-News* (circulation 26,716, population 57,951) pushed his paper's sales over the 25,000 mark with a carriers' campaign similar to community drives put on for charity. A giant thermometer erected in the newspaper office showed the results of each day's selling. Carriers watched with interest the climb of the red in the thermometer until on the final day it went to 25,109, more than 100 above the campaign goal.

All Staff Members Can Sell

District managers and supervisors may have their sales instincts stimulated at times by special bonus plans based on circulation increase in their districts. The Des Moines *Register* and *Tribune* pay a cash bonus ranging from \$15 to \$30 to each district manager each time he adds 50 subscribers to his territory and holds that number for 60 days.

Incentives directed to employees of the newspaper who are not in the circulation department often bring surprising results. The Kingfisher, Okla., *Times* and *Free Press* (combined circulation 6,056, population 3,345) and the Boonville, Mo., *Daily News* (circulation 3,215, population 6,686) make good use of their community correspondents in obtaining subscriptions. Correspondents concentrate their solicitation at Christmas time when a large share of the subscriptions will be expiring. To facilitate their work they are given lists of subscribers in their respective areas with the expiration dates, and are urged to seek both new subscriptions and renewals.

"We are glad to pay the commission involved," says C. S. Hubbard, *Times* and *Free Press* publisher, "because the correspondents bring in the subscriptions by groups, and this saves much time that would otherwise be taken up by waiting on subscribers individually."

The Boonville *Daily News* kicks off its contest between correspondents at a dinner meeting in mid-September and completes it on the week before Christmas, thereby enabling the correspondents to obtain some much appreciated Christmas spending money. Correspondents are divided into two teams called "Editors" and "Reporters" and the race becomes quite exciting. A flat commission of \$1.00 is paid for each new subscription and 50 cents for each renewal, with a prize given to the winning team.

Reporters and photographers can help in building circulation in outlying communities by going with solicitors to those places in order to gather news and take pictures. People usually will subscribe when they know their pictures and something about them are to appear in the newspaper. This plan is often used in developing new territory.

The Eau Claire, Wis., *Leader* and *Telegram* (combined circulation 26,927, population 36,048) set up a campaign to build circulation in several towns it had not been reaching, selecting as a "guinea pig" a town about 25 miles away. A careful survey was made, and the town was divided into ten carrier routes. A newspaper representative then went to the public school and asked for boys interested in delivering papers. Fifteen ambitious boys applied, and the ten best were selected. The circulation department explained the merits of the newspaper and trained them in selling. The carriers went to work

and in less than a year presented to the *Leader* and *Telegram* 151 new subscribers.

Some newspapers have drawn practically all of their employees into subscription-selling campaigns by offering attractive commissions and appealing prizes for contest winners. This gives employees an opportunity to help increase the newspaper's circulation and keep substantially sound the institution that employs them.

Selling Through Groups

Often persons not regularly employed by the newspaper may be induced to sell subscriptions when offered attractive commissions, prizes or premiums.

The Brigham, Utah, *Box Elder News* (circulation 2,387, population 6,790) increased its circulation substantially in this way: Readers were invited to suggest boys and girls in their respective communities who might be interested in earning cash commissions and prizes. To each youngster suggested was sent a letter asking him or her to take part in the contest. At the same time a full-page advertisement announced that 25 per cent cash commission on new subscriptions and 12½ per cent commission on renewals would be paid, plus a new television set and four deluxe bicycles as prizes. Forty-two contestants enrolled, were given a brief pep talk, handed an order and receipt book and told to start selling.

Charles W. Claybaugh, publisher of the *Box Elder News*, was greatly pleased when the first week's checkup showed that the youngsters had added 205 new subscribers, turned in \$1,292.25 in cash and earned \$248.85 in commissions. The next week they turned in 136 more new subscriptions, and the contest wound up with 594 new subscribers and \$3,383.75 additional money in the till. Out of this the publisher paid \$707.35 in commissions and bonuses and \$575 for prizes, leaving a net of \$2,494.93 in circulation revenue for the month.

The Fair Oaks, Calif., *San Juan Record* (circulation 1,821, population 3,500), another weekly newspaper, conducts an annual contest open to boys and girls over 10 years old, to whom commissions are paid on orders or renewals turned in. Half of the commission counts also as votes toward one of the prizes offered. In one contest, the first prize was a bicycle, the second prize a table model radio, and the third prize the choice of a nylon lariat rope or fishing tackle. Each year at least 100 new subscriptions have been obtained in this manner, plus a similar number of renewals, according to Selden Menefee, the publisher.

Some newspapers use school classes or groups to solicit new subscriptions, allowing them a commission of 50 per cent for their class fund or some other object for which they need money.

The Charlotte, N. C., *Mecklenburg Times* (circulation 1,982, population 134,042) increased its number of readers by approximately 100 and made a nice good-will contribution to a local church, when it set a goal of 100 new subscriptions to be sold within 30 days and then gave the total amount collected to a church building fund. The newspaper's profit from the deal came when more than 75 per cent of those obtained as subscribers renewed at the regular price at the end of the year.

Three Boy Scout troops of Georgetown, Del., added substantially to their activity funds and increased the circulation of the *Sussex Countian* (circulation 2,846, population 1,923) when they sold subscriptions to the paper at a commission of \$1.00 on each new subscription obtained.

Selling by Mail

Although selling subscriptions by mail has been more highly developed by magazines, it has been employed successfully by newspapers. Circulars, letters, broadsides and postcards are used, but the most successful approach by mail is through a warm, friendly letter written in plain "across the counter" language. The old reliable A-I-D-A structure (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) works best.

A terse, stimulating sentence that will catch the attention is the first step. This must be followed with a clear, convincing statement of the message. Something must be said to hold the reader's interest and create a desire for the newspaper. Then the closing paragraph must drive to action. Usually to clinch the deal a special offer of some sort is made with a time limit. A friendly closing word and the circulation manager's signature in his own handwriting completes a letter that should bring at least a 5 per cent return.

Certain precepts regarding the physical appearance of the letter should be observed: (1) Typewrite the letter or have it printed in typewriter-style type; (2) keep paragraphs reasonably short; (3) use punctuations to break up the copy; (4) be cautious in underlining and indenting; and (5) be sensible in use of marginal notations, points and postscripts.

LETTERS SHOULD SOUND PERSONAL

"In this type of selling you need a personal touch," says Robert Bauer, circulation manager of the Muscatine, Iowa, *Journal* (circulation 9,853, population 19,041). "Give your message warmth and personality, talk to your prospects as if they were sitting before you, and always use a facsimile or handwritten signature — DON'T TYPE."

Emphasizing some feature that ties in with national or local interest strengthens the feeling that the letter has been written

directly to each prospect. "Late news the SAME day" is the slogan used by the Des Moines *Register* and *Tribune* in building circulation by mail on their delivery routes in rural districts. "Our local Route Man thought you would like to read these sample copies," the letter reads. The suggestion is made also that "you need a big-time state newspaper in an election year." Three sample copies are delivered after which the prospect may have the papers for three weeks free when accompanied by an order for at least six weeks more.

Extra coverage of a certain phase of sports news is the basis of a direct-by-mail appeal by the New Ulm, Minn., *Journal* (circulation 8,177, population 9,348). In a letter to prospective subscribers, Kenneth Darlington, circulation manager, says with genuine enthusiasm: "Herb Schaper, *Journal* sports editor, and his staff are busy organizing the most outstanding baseball coverage this area has ever seen. Every league in the *Journal* area will be covered and and as many box scores as possible used. Baseball squabbles, rules interpretations, schedules, standings and everything that goes to make baseball America's favorite sport will be reported." The letter contains also tributes to the *Journal's* sports coverage from regular readers, the subscription rates, an order blank and a self-addressed, postage-paid return envelope.

USE SAMPLES TO LEAD THE WAY

Sending sample copies of the paper to prospective subscribers by mail or carrier is one of the most effective ways to introduce face-to-face or mail solicitation. Some weekly papers have delivered samples by carriers for a month or more to non-subscribers, thus enabling the solicitor to immediately establish a contact with his prospect. Often the prospect already has his mind made up to subscribe when the solicitor calls or the letter arrives.

The Mount Holly, N. J., *Herald* (circulation 9,190, population 8,206) found sampling by carriers and the following letter a good combination for obtaining subscribers:

Dear Neighbors:

For the past month we have been sending you "get acquainted" copies of the *Mount Holly Herald*. We sincerely hope you have enjoyed them.

The *Herald* will grow progressively more important to you the longer you stay in Mount Holly and we would like nothing better than to have you make this your home for life.

Also we would be happy to have you become a regular reader of the *Herald*. If you would like to subscribe at this time, the enclosed literature will explain a special money-saving offer.

When you are in the vicinity, please stop in and say "hello." We would like the opportunity of meeting you and showing you through the plant.

This letter bore the personal signature of G. Howard Sleeper, the publisher.

SURVEY SHOWS FOUR SAMPLING METHODS SUCCESSFUL

At the instigation of the Central States Circulation Managers Association, Melvin C. Kappler, circulation manager of the Moline, Ill., *Dispatch* made a survey of sampling methods used by association members. Four methods of sampling were covered in the survey: by city carriers, by suburban carriers, by motor route delivery, and by mail.

The survey revealed that those using samples in the city usually sent out an average of five papers a day for a week with each carrier. Most of them used a sticker, inviting the prospect to read the paper for a full week. On the final day, thanks was extended to the prospect for reading the paper and notice was given that the carrier would call on him soon to receive his order for continued service.

To assure a complete delivery of the samples each week, some circulation managers selected one or two prospects on each route as prize candidates. If the carrier successfully sampled them and obtained their orders, he received for each a \$2.00 bonus.

Another newspaper used a "treasure hunt" sampling system, whereby the carrier sampled his entire route one night and called back the following night to obtain orders. On the day following the sampling and before the carrier had opportunity to call on prospects, the route manager or supervisor placed show tickets or other prizes with a few people the boy had sampled, instructing them to give the prize to the carrier if he presented a good talk when he came to sell. Each carrier knew that a prize or two was awaiting him somewhere if he performed well. Thus, each home was contacted.

More sampling was done in the suburban areas than in the cities and when carriers called back to solicit orders they usually were accompanied by the district managers.

Not much sampling was done on the motor routes. The driver or contract hauler sometimes sampled farms or houses along the highway and made follow-up calls to receive orders.

Various means of sampling by mail were employed. Some circulation managers checked complete lists of rural route patrons against the names of those already taking the paper. To each non-subscriber was sent a letter, saying he would receive the paper by mail for two weeks, at the end of which time a solicitor would call. Other papers learned from the post office the number of patrons on each route and on a certain day delivered papers to all boxholders.

Letters featuring a special or a free offer for a limited time were other means used to bring in orders.

DRIVE FOR INSTANT REPLY

Accompanying the letter should be an order blank, either as a separate piece or as a coupon to be clipped from the bottom, and a return postage-free envelope. Live words should be used in the order blank, such as "Mail today," "Something special," or "Yes, I accept your guarantee offer for the time checked below." The provision of a penalty for delay works well as an inducement. Majority opinion decrees that the business reply envelope be a different color from the stock used for the letter. Goldenrod, canary and pink are recommended.

Various appeals to action are used in direct-by-mail selling. Discounts, free copies, premiums and installment rates are common offerings to induce prospects to respond instantly.

SPECIAL OFFERS PRODUCE PROMPTNESS

The offer of a slight reduction in subscription price or of an extra month free if accepted within a limited period often impels otherwise hesitant prospects to respond. Such offers usually are made at Christmas or in connection with a community sales day, in which all business concerns of the community are expected to unite.

The Afton, Wyo., *Star Valley Independent* (circulation 1,615, population 1,319) once participated in a "Fall Harvest Bargain Day" by offering to new subscribers a one-year \$3.50 subscription for \$2.00. "To take advantage of this offer, you must come in personally; no subscriptions will be accepted by mail," the newspaper said in a half-page advertisement.

The Pine Bluffs, Wyo., *Post* (circulation 1,853, population 846) occasionally makes an offer of "one month free" for immediate response to the following mailed notice:

SPECIAL SUBSCRIPTION OFFER!

Here is your chance to save some money on a subscription to the *Pine Bluffs Post* — Southeastern Wyoming's Leading Weekly Newspaper — the paper with the Big Classified Ad Section. The *Post* covers the entire area of southeastern Wyoming, northeastern Colorado and western Nebraska.

The *Post's* subscription rate is still the same as it has been for over 30 years, this despite the fact that it has more than doubled in size and increased many fold in coverage. But this isn't all — you get an Extra Month FREE if you send in the coupon below with your remittance for one, two or three years RIGHT AWAY! Use the envelope and check enclosed — No postage required!

PLUS ONE EXTRA MONTH FOR MAILING AT ONCE!

This makes your *Post* cost you only about 3c PER WEEK at the three-year rate, so — mail your check right away!

Tear off this slip and return with your remittance in the postage-paid envelope.

EASY PAYMENTS ARE EFFECTIVE

The La Crosse, Wis., *Tribune* found easy payments are frequent inducements in building circulation (see Fig. 9.3). Some newspapers serving large rural areas have almost doubled their mail orders by selling subscriptions on the installment plan. Rather than paying for a full year in advance, subscribers are permitted to make monthly remittances. If the subscription price is \$8.00 a year, the usual plan is to suggest \$1.00 payments for eight months and have the remaining four months without payments.

This easy payment plan has the following advantages, according to Robert Bauer, circulation manager of the Muscatine, Iowa, *Journal*, who has used it successfully in building rural circulation:

1. It establishes the spasmodic subscriber on a sound payment basis.
2. It appeals to the segment of population who for various reasons never have any sizeable amount of ready cash.
3. It appeals to newcomers in the community, because it affords an easy way to become acquainted with the newspaper.
4. It induces new subscribers to subscribe later on a yearly basis. During the life of the contract, the family reading habit is established, and there is great probability of volunteer renewal on annual basis when the contract expires.
5. It offers a wealth of possibilities to create ATTENTION, INTEREST, DESIRE and ACTION in direct mail efforts.

An objection offered by some publishers is the extra bookkeeping and mailing of notices and receipts that seem to be required in some offices. To cover any additional costs that may accrue in handling installment mail subscriptions, the Bloomington, Ill., *Pantagraph* (circulation 38,586, population 36,127) charges \$1.00 above the regular rate for such subscriptions.

The Muscatine *Journal*, however, believes that there is less routine with the monthly payment plan than with renewals on a quarterly basis. The subscriber's card serves as a monthly notice and, together with a business reply envelope, is mailed back and forth until payments have been completed.

"Our records are kept in a 30-day file," Bauer explains. "The subscriber's record and our office record card are kept together under the day of expiration. The contracts are billed in advance twice a month, from the 1st to the 15th and the 15th to the end of the

SEND NO MONEY NOW - SAVE UP TO \$5.00!


PAY As You READ


Dear Friend:


This letter is to tell you about an easy, sure way that will **save you money** — and add to the daily pleasure of you and your family — at the same time!

Yes, by subscribing to **THE LA CROSSE TRIBUNE** on the **MONTHLY PAYMENT PLAN**, whereby you **pay only \$1.00 a month** for ten months, a total of \$10.00, you can save up to \$5.00 under the regular subscription rates!

LET'S FIGURE IT OUT-YOU CAN STILL BE THRIFTY-IF YOU ACT NOW!

If you pay by the month at the regular rate of \$1.25 ($\1.25×12)  **YOU SAVE \$5.00**
the cost for the year is \$15.00

If you pay quarterly at the regular rate of \$3.00 ($\3.00×4)  **YOU SAVE \$2.00**
the cost for the year is \$12.00

If you pay semi-annually at the rate of \$5.50 ($\5.50×2)  **YOU SAVE \$1.00**
the cost for the year is \$11.00

Under the **MONTHLY PAYMENT PLAN** you don't pay \$15.00 a year, or \$12.00 a year — no not even \$11.00 a year — **all you pay is \$10.00 a year in ten monthly installments.** You subscribe for a year, read while you pay and then have the paper in your home two months longer without having to pay anything. We send you a reminder the first of each month and furnish you with postage paid envelopes for making your payments.

Yes, you will not only save money — you will get an outstanding value in the latest news, pictures, comics, popular features and down-to-earth reading pleasure during the coming months. **NOW IS THE TIME WHEN THE NEWS OF THE DAY — AND WHAT IT STANDS FOR — IS DOUBLY IMPORTANT.**

ORDER TODAY: Just fill out the coupon at the bottom of this page. Your subscription will start the same day your order is received by us. Enclose your first \$1.00, or if you wish we will bill you later. You don't need a stamp, as the enclosed envelope is already addressed and postage paid.

Sincerely yours,

The Circulation Department,
THE LA CROSSE TRIBUNE

(tear here and mail)

Date _____

Gentlemen: Please send me **THE LA CROSSE TRIBUNE** for **ONE YEAR** under the **MONTHLY PAYMENT PLAN**. I agree to pay \$1.00 a month for ten months or until a total of \$10.00 has been paid. I understand that you will send me a reminder the first of each month and will furnish me with postage paid envelopes for my payments.

I am enclosing \$_____ Please bill me later _____

NAME _____ RURAL ROUTE NUMBER _____

POSTOFFICE _____ STATE _____

FIG. 9.3 — Letter used by the La Crosse, Wis., Tribune to announce its "Pay-As-You-Read" Plan.

month. As they are billed, the subscriber's record card is mailed, and the office records for that period are filed according to date and put in front of the file. As payments are returned the credit is given on the cards and they are returned to proper date in the file. We make the stencil expiration date for the full year at the time the order is taken, and this date and each of the contract payments are recorded on the office record. If subscribers fail to make remittance on time, they are taken from the list."

MAY YIELD GOOD RETURNS

It is difficult to estimate the returns that a newspaper may receive in a direct-by-mail campaign. Magazines are satisfied with a 2 per cent return, but many newspapers feel that so small a return would hardly justify the use of the mails in obtaining subscriptions. Factors to be considered are timing, geographical coverage, and selection of prospects, but much depends, of course, upon the appeal of the letter and the offer it contains.

The Binghamton, N. Y., *Sun* (circulation 31,705, population 80,674) has had gratifying success with mail soliciting. Arket C. Lewis, circulation manager, says that Fall is the best time to go after new mail subscribers. He found that the technique traditionally used by magazine publishers is equally applicable to newspapers: instead of offering the new prospect a "spread" of subscription terms, one specific offer should be made for the get-acquainted subscription, at a somewhat reduced price. Describing one such campaign in *Circulation Management*,⁵ Lewis says:

The offer we chose was 100 issues for \$2.00. This represents only a slight reduction from our regular mail subscription rate, but it gave us a talking point in approaching our prospects.

Instead of sending the mailing out to RFD boxholders, we decided to pinpoint our approach to prospects by name. The main reason for this was, of course, to avoid wasting a sizable part of our promotion on boxholders who already subscribed to our paper. To accomplish this purpose, we rounded up telephone directories covering the sections of the state we proposed to cover. The towns where we provide home delivery were excluded.

We also "matched" the phone books against our mail subscriber galleys for the respective localities to eliminate current subscribers. Yes, this was quite a job but we gave ourselves a few weeks in which to do it and it proved to be worth while by giving us a really effective prospect list for our mailing.

Reply-O-Letter was used so that one addressing did three jobs for us: it personalized the letter (this is important), it served as the address on the window envelope and it automatically "pre-signed" the reply form. This reply form is a combination of an order blank and money-carrying reply envelope.

⁵ *Circulation Management*, Oct., 1955, p. 15.

We mailed out 20,000 letters and received 601 orders. This is just over 3 per cent, which we consider a very satisfactory return. At the end of the introductory subscription period, we sent to these new subscribers our regular Reply-O-Renewal notices and obtained 316 renewals which, of course, were at our regular subscription rates. This represents a conversion ratio of 52½ per cent. I may add that over one-half of these renewals were for one year or six-months terms—another assurance that these new subscribers will stick.

We were very satisfied with the results of this promotion which added a new group of readers to our mail subscription list. As to cost, we not only got our money back from the first renewal payments on the subscriptions obtained, but even showed a profit.

Selling by Telephone

Selling subscriptions by telephone is growing in popularity, particularly in large cities, although this method may be used effectively by smaller papers as well.

The New York *Herald Tribune* (circulation 361,379, population 7,891,957) conducts its telephone campaigns from a private telephone room in its newspaper building (see Fig. 9.4). In one campaign, six long lines into selected areas of suburban territory were used and the newspaper was offered to new readers on a trial basis of



FIG. 9.4 — Subscription solicitors at work in the telephone room of the New York *Herald Tribune*.

three months for the price of two. Most of the calling was during evening hours. "We have had a very good experience with our telephone soliciting," says Barney G. Cameron, circulation director. "Of course, we are plowing almost a virgin field, but our checkups reveal approximately 67 per cent of all the business we write is still on the books at the end of sixty days."

The Toronto, Ont., *Star* (circulation 400,021, population 662,096) solicits by telephone during the fall and winter months but not during the summer. It carefully screens its solicitor applicants, selecting persons who can express themselves interestingly, as evidenced by their letters of application. Each solicitor is given a sheet taken from a telephone cross-reference directory, listing the residents with their addresses and telephone numbers, and opposite each resident's name is written the name of the carrier who serves him. When the solicitor calls he gives the name of the carrier and tells the prospect that the boy is a near neighbor ready to give him good service. No price inducement or charity appeal is used to influence persons to subscribe. Solicitors are paid a salary plus commission and earn from \$30 to \$45 a week. They work from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. each day except Saturday, when they work only three hours in the morning.

The Long Beach, Calif., *Independent* and *Press-Telegram* (combined circulation 150,748, population 250,767) conduct large-scale telephone sales drives. Working entirely on a commission basis, salesmen use a basic sales message prepared by the manager of the telephone room. This usually contains a free offer of some sort or a charity benefit. On two occasions the Disabled American Veterans were given a share of the cash received from telephone orders, and between ten and fifteen thousand subscriptions were received in each campaign. Best results were obtained between 9 and 12 in the morning and from 5:30 to 8 at night. Experience reveals that a good sales person can average from 80 to 90 calls per day.

The Moline, Ill., *Dispatch* gives each carrier the names of non-subscribers living on his route. He then telephones them explaining that he is the *Dispatch* carrier in their neighborhood and would like a chance to leave a paper for a few weeks in order that they may see what a good paper he represents. This method helps a carrier to lose his shyness and to develop a sales talk.

Selling by TV and Radio

Newspapers may use television and radio to help carriers or salesmen reach nonsubscribers. A bright-faced carrier who can make a clever talk not only pulls in orders from his own territory, but also makes it easier for carriers with less self-confidence to make their first approaches. Usually orders obtained this way must be sent to the carrier through the station.

The Columbia, Mo., *Missourian* (circulation 3,415, population 31,974) has made effective use of television. Jack Carr, the circulation manager, appeared on the screen with carriers in a series of interviews, in which boys related their experiences (see Fig. 9.5). Pictures of carriers carefully placing *Missourians* on the porches of customers were used in another series of TV advertisements.



FIG. 9.5 — Jack Carr, circulation manager of Columbia, Mo., *Missourian*, and carrier appear on television in a subscription-selling campaign.

Some newspapers use television and radio regularly to advertise their features and services. When a general circulation campaign is conducted television appearances and radiocasts fit well into the program.

Silent Salesmen — Honor Boxes and Vending Machines

Still another available means of selling newspapers is by sales racks, sometimes called “silent salesmen.” Racks filled with newspapers are placed at street intersections, at bus stops, in business hallways, and in many other places where people pass or congregate. They draw in many nickels and dimes from persons who find them handy for obtaining the news. “Honor boxes” have coin boxes at

the sides, into which the customer may place a coin when taking a paper. Much reliance is placed on the customer's honesty but the amount of money taken in is surprising.

The Milwaukee, Wis., *Sentinel* (circulation 194,026, population 637,392) has placed racks in the 1,000 busses of the Milwaukee Transport Company. A display card placed above the rack invites transit riders to "move back to the rear for today's *Sentinel*." The St. Louis *Globe-Democrat* (circulation 310,243, population 856,796) also sells single copies through self-service racks on the Public Service Company busses of that city.

The Buffalo, N. Y., *Courier-Express* (circulation 168,672, population 580,132) has been successful in placing "honor boxes" in many large industries, including the Bethlehem Steel Corporation, Ford Motor Company, Chevrolet Company, Westinghouse Electric Corporation, and Western Electric. Racks placed in distant towns also have brought in good returns, according to Howard W. Bishop, circulation manager. When Bishop was no longer able to get a boy to sell papers at the Pennsylvania Railway station in the small town of Olean, he installed an "honor box" there. Within less than two months the box was selling an average of 25 copies per day.

Sales racks in grocery stores sell an astonishing number of papers daily. Many of the estimated 77,000,000 persons shopping in supermarkets every week are one-stop shoppers who want to make all their purchases in one place. They expect to find their favorite newspaper in the supermarket, usually near the door. Many grocery stores that have no newsstands will permit the circulation department of the home town newspaper to place a rack in or near the store's entrance.

Vending boxes, which will not release the paper until the coin is deposited in the slot, now are being used by a number of the larger papers. These are expensive but they assure the publisher of the full purchase price for each copy and they keep papers on sale for 24 hours of the day. Some states, as well as cities, have vending machine license laws, which add to the cost of operation.

The Norristown, Pa., *Times Herald* (circulation 23,467, population 38,126) installed five automatic vending machines along with 30 "honor boxes" at strategic locations throughout its circulation area. From these outlets it sold more than 10,000 papers a month, according to John T. McGuire, circulation manager, and out of the profits soon paid for the machines and boxes. Of course, cash was not received for all copies taken from the "honor boxes," but from the standpoint of return on the investment, "honor boxes" wisely placed ranked well with the vending machines.

The Allentown, Pa., *Call and Chronicle* (combined circulation 92,361, population 106,756) during September, 1956, sold 62,953

copies from 74 automatic vending machines and three honor boxes. This was a daily sales average of 2,380 weekday issues and 1,162 Sunday issues. The automatic machines were spotted as follows: 6 at the publishing plant and branch offices, 22 at 24-hour dining rooms and restaurants, 10 at important street intersections, 8 at stores, 6 in small communities, 5 at bus stops, 5 at parking lots, 10 at supermarkets, 3 at hospitals and one at a railroad station.⁶

Vending-machine patrons often become regular customers on delivery routes.

Street Salesmen Sell Many Single Copies

Street salesmen and newsstands will dispose of many papers daily, if properly supervised. Success in operating street sales depends largely on: (1) keeping a large number of boys and men in the sales force; (2) training them in how to hold their papers and approach prospects; (3) stationing the salesmen at points where there is much traffic; and (4) determining the best hours of the day to contact people at various points.

Successful sales at newsstands depend on: (1) getting the papers to the stands promptly; (2) giving each dealer all the papers he is likely to need — never letting him run short; and (3) helping the dealer to promote sales by furnishing him display racks and promotion cards.

Rural newsstands are circulation builders for a weekly newspaper when properly used, the Oconomowoc, Wis., *Enterprise* (circulation 3,919, population 5,345) has learned. "We use every possible outlet in all our rural areas as well as in the city — grocery stores, drug stores, restaurants and the like," says C. W. Brown, publisher. "The papers usually are placed on counters. We do not favor racks. They are too formal. In a drug store where sales run to about 100 copies a week papers lie on the floor near the door. The best place for them is by the cash register. Newsstand purchasers in these rural areas are potential mail subscribers."

The Mount Holly, N. J., *Herald*, a weekly newspaper published within 19 miles of Philadelphia, serves two-thirds of its circulation through street salesmen and newsstands. It has more than 100 sales outlets, twenty in Mount Holly alone. To these stands and to every post office in the county the *Herald* is delivered each Thursday, starting at 2 o'clock in the morning.

"We find that a person will buy a *Herald* if approached by a newsboy or if he 'stumbles' over one at each turn," says G. Howard Sleeper, publisher, "whereas, he won't go out of his way to look for one. Basically, we try to make it easy for a person to buy a *Herald*."

⁶ ICMA Official Bulletin, Dec., 1956, p. 9.

In the use of boys or girls for street selling, the newspaper must be careful not to violate child labor laws. There is public antipathy to very small children selling on the streets after dark. Not only do the national child labor laws look after these children but in some cities there are ordinances forbidding children to sell. For further discussion on this point see Chapter 18.

Campaigns for Quick Increase

When newspapers feel it is necessary to make a rapid increase in circulation they usually resort to a well-planned campaign which brings into operation about every method that may be employed to obtain subscriptions.

The Hackensack, N. J., *Bergen Evening Record* (circulation 67,604, population 29,219) puts on an annual campaign for a 1,000 increase in circulation. This usually takes place in November and the entire home delivery personnel participates. The drive starts with a kick-off breakfast at a local restaurant. The circulation manager outlines the plan, announces the quotas for the districts and tells each carrier how many orders he must bring in to make his route contribute its share of the 1,000 increase. A big steak dinner is promised if the goal is reached. Each year the *Record* has gone over the top in this drive, and the publisher has joined the circulation personnel in its steak victory banquet.

The Federalsburg, Md., *Times* (circulation 1,994, population 1,878) employed three solicitors for a 5-week period and instructed them to call on every home in Federalsburg, nearby towns and rural districts. The three turned in a total of more than 1,000 subscribers.

Carriers' incentives and telephone solicitations both were used by the New York *News* (circulation 2,156,137, population 7,891,957) in a drive to increase its home delivery circulation in the most populous boroughs and in suburban areas. Home delivery service was launched with a house-to-house canvass by a specially created unit of the circulation department. This was followed by a bonus system for city and suburban route carriers who brought in new orders for the *News*. Telephone solicitation was used largely in the suburban areas.

The La Crosse, Wis., *Tribune* (circulation 33,534, population 47,535) conducts an annual newspaper and magazine club selling campaign in January. Preliminary training is given during free time of the Christmas and New Year holidays. Objectives are outlined to the carriers in groups of ten and twenty, with all plans disclosed except what the prizes are to be. Prizes range from portable radios and wrist watches down to inexpensive pocket knives, and are announced later at a general mass meeting. Teaser bulletins and postcards mailed to boys at their homes keep them alerted during the campaign.

REGULAR READERS CAN ASSIST

Regular subscribers, too, can be a great help in building circulation. The Oconomowoc, Wis., *Enterprise* obtains this assistance through a personalized sampling plan. At intervals the newspaper offers to each of approximately 200 regular subscribers the privilege of naming a friend to receive the paper free for two months. This adds to the mailing list prospects who later become regular readers. The offer is explained in the following letter:

Dear Subscriber:

Would you like to give, without cost to you, a "Guest Subscription" to a friend of yours who is not now a subscriber to the Oconomowoc ENTERPRISE?

Because you are a regular ENTERPRISE subscriber, we are extending you this privilege. All you need to do is write the name and address of your friend on the bottom of this letter and return it to us.

We will notify your friend of your gift and send him (or her) the ENTERPRISE for two months. Our purpose is to show the expanded news coverage, features and pictures of the ENTERPRISE to the comparatively few area residents who do not now receive it, believing that they will wish to continue as regular subscribers.

There is no obligation whatever to anyone. The ENTERPRISE is a NEWS-paper of the community carrying all the news of the city and area as well as the advertising which offers opportunities to buy it at savings many times the subscription cost. In that way, a subscription is a GOOD investment.

The only requirements are: Your guest must not be a regular subscriber and must live not more than 10 miles from Oconomowoc.

We are enclosing a stamped return envelope for your reply. Simply write the name and address of your friend on this letter and mail it NOW. Your friend will be pleased.

Thank you,

OCONOMOWOC ENTERPRISE

Then to each person suggested to receive the sample copies the newspaper sends this letter:

Mr. John Smith
Route 3
Oconomowoc, Wis.

Dear Mr. Smith:

We are happy to advise you that you will receive the Oconomowoc ENTERPRISE for the next sixty days at no cost to you.

You are receiving the paper through the courtesy of Mrs. John Jones who requested us to send it to you. This is a privilege we extended to a few of our subscribers.

The purpose of this courtesy on the part of Mrs. Jones and the ENTERPRISE is to better acquaint you with your local newspaper and its con-

stantly increasing number of features, pictures and all the news of the city and surrounding area.

We hope you will continue as a subscriber after the 60-day period when the regular subscription expiration notices will be sent, but you need not feel under any obligation to continue if you do not wish to.

In the ENTERPRISE ads will be found savings many times the subscription price. In that way, a subscription is a good investment.

We're pleased that your name is among those receiving the ENTERPRISE as a "Guest Subscriber." We hope you'll like it. The ENTERPRISE is your home town newspaper.

Yours very truly,

OCONOMOWOC ENTERPRISE

C. W. Brown, publisher of the *Enterprise*, reports in the *National Publisher*⁷ that out of 140 "guests" in one personalized sampling program, 38 mailed in their orders (and money) as new subscribers. Their names were furnished by 122 subscribers.

The Mitchell, S. D., *Republic* (circulation 17,493, population 12,123) enclosed with each expiration notice, a slip asking the subscriber if he had a friend not taking the paper who would like to receive a sample copy. Subscription offers accompanied the samples sent to these persons.

A second plan used by the *Republic* was to have the paper checked every day for items about persons who were not subscribers. Whenever such occurred, the item was marked in a copy of the paper and it was mailed to the person mentioned along with a printed slip inviting him to subscribe. Hale Raber, general manager, says good results were obtained from both sources.

The Broken Arrow, Okla., *Ledger* (circulation 1,999, population 3,262) each year puts on a subscription-selling campaign directed by its own staff. Cash prizes are offered, and those who do not qualify for prizes are paid commissions on sales totals. "Such a drive not only adds subscribers but it gives your advertisers the feeling that you are aggressive and sincere in your efforts to give them a good return on their advertising dollar,"⁸ says C. A. McWilliams, publisher.

A circulation campaign should be aimed always at building sound, permanent circulation. It may be as elaborate as any newspaper wants, but to maintain a high interest all the way it should not extend over too long a period. It should provide attractive rewards for the efforts of those who take part.

⁷ *National Publisher*, Jan., 1956, p. 13.

⁸ *Oklahoma Publisher*, July, 1956, p. 4.