

“People buy a newspaper for something in it of use to themselves or members of their families. Exploiting new features gets the newspaper purchased in new homes and further entrenches it in homes where it is purchased.”

— C. H. FAVOR,  
Circulation Manager,  
Utica, N.Y.,  
*Daily Press*

## CHAPTER 14

# *Circulation Promotion*

CONTINUOUS CIRCULATION PROMOTION is essential to the progress of any newspaper. Television and other attractions constantly bid for the time people might spend in reading newspapers. Not only must this competition be met, but circulation must provide its full share of revenue needed to meet labor and material costs, which have risen substantially in recent years. Even if a newspaper had no local competition with another paper, a radio or television station, promotion still would be important, for the newspaper always has prestige to maintain.

### **PROMOTION MUST BE WELL PLANNED**

Whether planning promotion for a continuous program over the entire territory or for a special campaign directed toward a certain community or area, the general development and carrying out of these plans should include at least seven important steps:

1. Analyze the problem to be solved.
2. Create what would appear to be an effective plan.
3. Evaluate total costs and probable returns.
4. Coordinate the various details to be handled.
5. Institute the plan.
6. Carry out each detail with thoroughness and dispatch.
7. Check and conserve the results obtained.

### **Analyze the Individual Problem**

The purpose of any campaign must be definite and clear if it is to be a success. Individual problems of each newspaper must be

studied to ascertain where circulation can be increased to bring greatest benefit to the paper. When the area has been selected, whether it is a new area to be opened up or an old area to be improved, first consideration must be given to the feasibility of getting additional papers distributed.

If this condition can be met, the next consideration is, can the newspaper be marketed in its present form? Will it be necessary to increase news coverage or add features not now included in the contents? Will it be possible to expand column space to accommodate new developments? If opening a new area is being considered, will there be adequate means of obtaining news from this locality? Can present personnel handle increased work loads, or will it be necessary to hire more help? Can the equipment and space within the plant be adjusted to handle larger circulation?

### **Create an Effective Plan**

When such an analysis indicates favorable results may be expected, the promotion itself can be planned. One of the first steps would be a survey to ascertain how many homes are not now receiving the paper. A second step would be a study of which means would be most effective in reaching and convincing these prospects. Will house-to-house solicitation be possible? Can selling points be presented best by direct letter, radio and television advertising, in news columns and space advertising in the paper, or what combinations of these forces? What, if any, inducements should be offered?

### **Evaluate Total Cost and Probable Returns**

Two important questions must be answered at this stage of the planning:

1. What will be the total costs of the promotion and will it be justified by the results?
2. Will the results obtained be permanent and will they be conducive to still greater circulation growth in the area?

Every cost item must be considered. First, the actual cost of the campaign must be estimated conscientiously, everything from postage to extra personnel to carry it out. The second estimate will cover the costs of maintaining an increased circulation, including costs of printing and delivering additional papers, and keeping records for them. If increased circulation will necessitate enlarging the newspaper or adding extra help, these costs must be anticipated.

There is no accurate formula for estimating the number of new subscriptions, but a reasonable goal may be set, and that figure used in evaluating probable returns. Cash from subscription sales is only one income to be considered. Of even greater potential are the three

possible sources of expanded advertising revenue: (1) prospective advertisers who are not now buying space in the paper; (2) more space to be sold current advertisers on the basis of greater circulation; and (3) an increase in advertising rate permissible with greater circulation.

Less tangible factors that cannot be included in a column of figures, but definitely belong on the "plus" side are: (1) prestige ("Everybody around here takes the *Blank* so I guess I will, too."); (2) a proportionately lower cost of future promotion; and (3) "squatters' rights" — once a newspaper is thoroughly entrenched in a territory, competitors seldom encroach.

### **Coordinate the Various Details**

All departments of the newspaper will need to work together in order to have the mechanics of the campaign operate smoothly. The news department will cover the campaign as news stories, and plan for increased news of interest to new subscribers. The advertising department will help prepare promotional material for the news columns, the advertising section of the paper, radio and television material and all printed material going directly to the prospective subscribers. The circulation department will see that sample copies are distributed for several days before intensive solicitation begins. The record-keeping department must be prepared to process speedily the new subscriptions. It is essential that there be no slip-up or delay after the campaign gets underway, for a loss of momentum will obstruct the most carefully planned campaign. Coordination must be carefully devised in a schedule of activity that can and will be followed with dispatch, thoroughness and orderliness.

### **Institute the Plan**

According to conditions and possibilities within a newspaper organization, circulation promotion generally is handled in one of five ways:

1. By the newspaper's owner.
2. By the circulation manager, who considers promotion to be one of his several responsibilities.
3. By the advertising department, which for many small and medium-sized newspapers is the promotion department as well as the advertising department.
4. By the newspaper's general promotion department, which plans and supervises promotion for the newspaper's departments, features and services.
5. By the circulation department's own promotion manager.

The first three methods are more common with smaller newspapers, where members of the business staff are compelled to serve in several capacities. Usually on weeklies and small dailies either the publisher,

the circulation manager or the advertising manager prepares all the promotion material that is used and conducts promotion campaigns. If a newspaper's business is not large enough to justify a separate promotion department with a skilled man in charge, and even if its advertising manager or circulation manager may not seem to have time to carry on some promotion, the publisher himself may become a promotion manager and sell his newspaper, its features and services to the people of the area he wishes to serve.

Circulation promotion for larger newspapers is done either through a well-staffed promotion department maintained to promote all services of the newspaper including circulation, or through the circulation department's own promotion division.

The owners and managers of the Minneapolis, Minn., *Star and Tribune* (combined circulation 497,784, population 521,718) have steadfastly supported the principle of a centralized department to promote not only circulation, but advertising, news coverage and features as well.

"By keeping our forces centralized in one unit, we are able to throw the best manpower in maximum force into the most important project of the hour, day, week or month," says Otto A. Silha, business manager. "We have some specialists, but everyone in the department is perfectly capable of utilizing his ability on any project, and we do not hesitate to so employ them."

The opposite view, however, is taken by the Fresno, Calif., *Bee* (circulation 95,552, population 91,669), where a circulation promotion manager works closely with the circulation manager in an extensive, exclusive promotion program.

### **Carry Out the Details**

In planning either continuous circulation promotion or special campaigns it is necessary to integrate the five directions in which promotion can be pointed:

1. Toward regular members of the newspaper staff, who should be ready at all times to speak a good word for the newspaper that employs them.
2. Toward the newspaper's regular readers, who need to be kept sold on the newspaper in order that they may be promoters of the newspaper to their friends and neighbors.
3. Toward persons who are not regular readers and, therefore, are not acquainted with the paper.
4. Toward merchants and manufacturers who advertise. They are constantly eager for information concerning circulation growth.
5. Toward improving relationships with the community in which the newspaper is published and from which it must draw a major part of its circulation.

A newspaper cannot expect to maintain its following and its influence in the community it serves unless it is able to sell itself to persons in each of the above five categories.

#### MAKE PROMOTERS OF STAFF MEMBERS

A newspaper's best promoters should be those who day by day help to make the newspaper. The linotype operator, the girl at the telephone in the front office and the boy who sells on the street should know as well as the publisher what the paper contains to interest the public and the service it is able to give readers and advertisers. Employees should know also that the soundness of the organization which provides for them a living depends upon maintaining a stable circulation. If they don't know these facts, and don't feel strongly concerning them, they should be informed and brought immediately into a sales attitude.

In this basic promotion, the weekly or small daily paper can be as diligent and as successful as a larger newspaper. Some weekly papers are outstandingly successful in keeping employees sold on the institution that employs them. By personal contact and example a publisher may establish policies and aims. Furthermore, promotion material may be used to impress more firmly upon staff members the goals of the organization.

When a newspaper achieves unusual success and is given special recognition, staff members should feel that they had as much to do in bringing honor to the newspaper as the manager and owners. The Mexico, Mo., *Ledger* (circulation 7,435, population 11,623) has an entire wall of its lobby covered with certificates of awards for community service, general excellence, typographical style and make-up, local news coverage, farm coverage, effective public relations, sprightly editorial writing, timely photography and outstanding special editions. Each day as they come to work, employees undoubtedly view with great pride and inner satisfaction this display. It impresses upon customers also the high standing of the home-town newspaper. Employees and subscribers alike are helped to become circulation boosters.

On a large newspaper, where close contacts between publisher and employees are more difficult, bulletins, house organs and other means of publicity are, to a greater extent, the promotion media. Improvements in the plant, results obtained by advertisers, goals set for the various departments and those reached by individual members may be described in a house organ. Recreational and social activities also may be announced.

When new features are introduced in the newspaper, such as a good comic or a special column on a timely subject, members of the entire force should be informed first. They can help to advertise the innovations supplied by the newspaper. They should be informed

also concerning any changes in advertising or subscription rates. No staff member likes to be found ignorant of anything concerning his newspaper, and he may be caught up easily by friends or patrons if he is not kept fully informed.

Staff members also may be the subjects of some effective newspaper promotion. The Kansas City *Star* (circulation 344,070, population 456,622) in 1955 and 1956 ran a series of large display ads, featuring its news writers (see Fig. 14.1). Each ad introduced a staff member, carried his picture, told something about his background and the services he performed for the newspaper. This kind of promotion not only stimulates readers' interest in the paper but it strengthens the bond of loyalty between employees and management.

When the Chicago *News* (circulation 588,576, population 3,620,962) in 1956 cracked the big story about under-cover work in the Illinois Attorney General's office, resulting in penitentiary punishment for those involved, the *News* told in its Sunday features section exactly how the facts were uncovered by an alert and efficient news staff. The reaction on newspaper readers and *News* employees could be only that the *News* was awake, responsive and dependable in digging up facts and giving the news.

The Moline, Ill., *Dispatch* (circulation 27,343, population 37,397) experienced gratifying reaction from the members of its force and from its readers when it published a full page of pictures and stories illustrating how *Dispatch* writers strive to serve the public. Editors, reporters and suburban correspondents were shown on the job, and some of the news sources were explained.

The same idea was carried out by the Champaign-Urbana, Ill., *News-Gazette* (circulation 26,610, population 62,397) when it issued a 4-page promotion piece entitled "The Story of a Good Newspaper." Emphasized were departments, features and articles of unusual interest appearing daily in the paper.

The Cleveland, Ohio, *News* (circulation 143,604, population 914,808) supplies its carriers with attractive announcements whenever new features are to appear (see Fig. 14.2). Carriers use these effectively in soliciting new subscribers.

#### **Keep Constantly "On Firing Line"**

One of the most difficult tasks confronting the person responsible for circulation is that of keeping himself, his district managers, salesmen and carriers on their toes, constantly striving for more circulation by the use of every legitimate means. What may be done by newspaper employees outside the circulation department is but a supplement to the continuous search for new ideas and the constant hammering away that must be done within the department.

John S. Shank, circulation director of the Dayton, Ohio, *Daily*

# In a Dusty Drawer, a Box of Sweet Caps

(TEENAGERS WON'T REMEMBER)

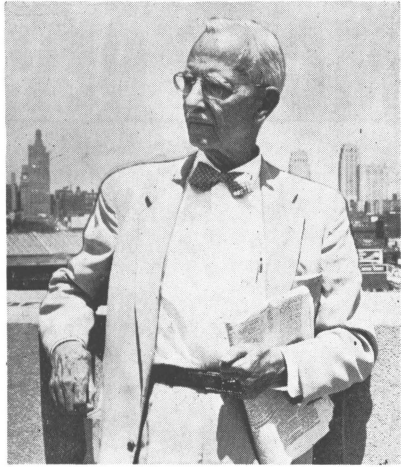
HENRY VAN BRUNT once asked The Star's cashier to find out how long he'd been a member of The Star's staff. The cashier promised to dig into the pay-roll record and find out, and eventually she came up with the information. The year Henry was hired (following a personal interview with William Rockhill Nelson, who frowned when Henry said he'd been editor of his school paper and rumbled: "Nothing could be worse") was 1912. Henry can't recall whether it was April 1 or May 1, and he says it doesn't seem important.

Henry thinks Colonel Nelson, The Star's founder, wouldn't have given him the job if he hadn't admired Henry's father, an eminent architect and a man so intellectual, in the colonel's opinion, that the great editor may have hoped some of his mental powers might have rubbed off on Henry.

The colonel gave Henry an assignment to write a column called "The Commodore," evidently because Henry's father, who had Civil war naval experience, was called Commodore by close friends. The column purported to give sage advice to young men on dress and deportment. Being little past voting age himself, Henry found it an onerous chore.

HENRY had left a New England boarding school and Harvard college without leanings in any direction. The family, consisting of four brothers (one Henry's twin) and two sisters, had moved to Kansas City from Cambridge, Mass., Henry's birthplace, in the 1880's. The Van Brunts gradually identified themselves with the Mid-Western scene and a Gay Nineties mode of living, although, Henry suspects, always with a stout New England "anchor to windward." Henry put down his roots in Kansas City at once and has never returned. He supposed he'd long ago lost the last vestige of "Boston accent," but he admits to occasional nostalgia for the fragrance of pines and mussel shoals at low tide (and chiggerless turf).

In an experimental way, Henry had tried wholesale hardware and insurance. With no particular sense of dedication, he found a desk in The Star's editorial room, which he still uses. His predecessor at the desk was a man called Inky Campbell. Not long ago Henry forced open a balky drawer and in



Star Photograph by Dave Cauthen.

the back compartment found a monogrammed tobacco pouch and pipe—both in advanced stage of decay—and an empty cigarette box labeled "Sweet Caporal."

In his newspaper career, Henry has remained essentially a feature writer and editor of copy. His experiences as a reporter have been mainly "on loan" from the city desk. Translating articles from the French for The Star is a sort of hobby.

In recent years Henry's writing has dealt mainly with subjects which called for research in local and regional history—events, manners and customs. "When I started this branch of writing a decade or so ago," Henry reminisces, "I had access to a fairly large number of Kansas Citians who 'remembered when.' Now most of them have gone, and recently I realized that I myself am now considered the old-timer and authority on things past.

Not long ago George Fuller Green showed Henry a city plat of an area where Henry once played cowboy and Indian. On the plat was a diagonal line running northeastward from the present Westport high school. The line, which cut through trees and tangled shrubs, was labeled "Independence-Westport Turnpike." It was a diversion of the Santa Fe trail. Van Brunt boulevard was named for Henry's family. He is the only member of The Star's staff whose family has been so honored.

Henry (named for his father but around the office rarely called anything but Harry) lives at Rockhill road and Cherry, where he gardens diligently, with good results. His quiet essay style and steady contribution to knowledge of Kansas City history and folklore are reasons why—

YOUR BIG READING BARGAIN BY FAR IS YOUR KANSAS CITY STAR

FIG. 14.1 — One of a series of ads used by the Kansas City Star to promote a "neighborly" relationship between readers and members of the staff, and to reward deserving employees.

# MORE NEW FEATURES

YOU'RE SURE TO ENJOY  
IN THE  
**CLEVELAND NEWS**



★ **"ARCHIE"** . . a NEW, rollicking  
COMIC the whole family will enjoy!

★ **HOWARD BEAUFAIT** writes a series  
of thrilling articles on the BIG STORIES  
he has covered over the years.  
THIS IS TOO GOOD TO MISS!

★ **ED BANG** . . Dean of SPORTS writers  
brings you "Four Score Years of Baseball  
in Cleveland." A fine series of stories for both  
young and "Old Timer" SPORTS FANS!

★ **PLUS AN AUTO SHOW CONTEST WITH BIG CASH PRIZES**  
and **"CASHWORDS" PUZZLE** . . with even **BIGGER CASH PRIZES**

**ALL THIS . . . in the**

**CLEVELAND NEWS**

Have The **NEWS** delivered to **YOUR** home. Phone **PROspect 1-4800** Ask for **CIRCULATION**

FIG. 14.2 — In this way the Cleveland, Ohio, **News** announces new features  
and helps carriers in their sales work.

*News and Journal-Herald* (combined circulation 247,822, population 243,872), says that good management must answer these questions concerning any promotion plan:

1. Why do I need this particular promotion?
2. What will it cost? Can all costs be anticipated now?
3. Does the need justify the cost?



4. What will happen if we do not use the promotion? How seriously will it affect our problem?

Before instituting any promotion plan, the Dayton newspapers “nail down” specific objectives, costs and result expectations. One of the most successful campaigns conducted by these papers was what they designated as “Happy Newspaperboy—Happy Counselor” contest, based on the fact that carriers, district managers and counselors can be happy at their work only when they are able to have satisfactory results. Within two weeks the circulation personnel obtained more than 4,000 daily and Sunday 13-week subscriptions, according to Shank. The first move in this campaign was to plan every step, and the circulation director included members of his organization in the planning stage by submitting these questions for them to answer:

- A. How many customers does each division need:
  - (1) to replace ordinary customer turnover?
  - (2) to reach its sales quota for the year or period?
- B. How much per order and increase should we spend? Should this be the same for city and country? Are there any special competitive areas where newspaperboys may not respond to a regular offer or where subscribers may be more difficult to obtain?
- C. Should a portion of cost on this particular program be allocated to morale and good will?
- D. How will the contest be presented? Meetings for all divisions? When? Where? Separate meetings? When? Where? Will sample prizes be needed for display at meetings? Will refreshments be served? What?
- E. Starting date for contest: branch office; independent.
- F. Order-getting period: branch office; independent.
- G. Date contest ends: branch office; independent.
- H. Should contest prizes be merchandise, trips or a combination?
- I. Is there any particular seasonal incentive to be used in prize selection or contest theme? Is there any editorial feature to tie in?
- J. Does any division need special incentives for branch and district counselors? What should these include? Why are they necessary? How much will they cost?
- K. Should we use “gimmick” prizes for extra stimulation and immediate payoff? How much per order can we allow for “gimmick” prizes? What will be our total cost on these?
- L. Prize selection:
  - (1) Should we create our own prize folder or is there a package deal available?
  - (2) What limitations or problems will result from the package deal? From the created program? What will be the difference in cost?
- M. Materials needed:
  - (1) Prize folders — city division, country division, independent; cost — art, type, printing.
  - (2) Branch posters — country division, city division; cost — art, type, printing.

- (3) Follow-up bulletins — how many? Are any special bulletins needed for particular problems?
  - (4) Rule sheets — city division, branch office (quantity); city division street sales; country division branch office; country division independent.
  - (5) Contest record sheets — city division (total), country division, independent; quantity for city branch counselors, city district counselors, country branch counselors, country district counselors.
  - (6) Prize record sheets (quantity).
  - (7) Subscription blanks — city division, country division; how many subscription blanks should be included in initial mailing for city branch newspaperboys, city branch counselors, city district counselors, country branch newspaperboys, country independent newspaperboys, country branch counselors, country district counselors?
- N. Mailing and enclosing data: Contest folder — branch office; independent; envelope — size, date to be ready; follow-up bulletins — title, mailing date, envelope size.

In keeping with the slogan, a spirit of cheerfulness was maintained throughout the campaign. Each branch counselor was requested to submit a daily report, showing the branch goal and the number of orders received toward that goal. The newspaper requested this information in an attitude of helpfulness and not as a command, as manifested in this form:

BRANCH COUNSELOR'S  
 "HAPPY NEWSPAPERBOY-HAPPY COUNSELOR"  
 DAILY SUMMARY

Branch \_\_\_\_\_ District \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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Setting a definite goal for the number of winners you will have and the number of new subscribers you will obtain in your branch, will help you to conduct a successful campaign.

Of course, we're interested in the progress you make and the new order "steps" you'll be taking toward your goal.

So, we'd appreciate your making out the following summary each day — just mail it in the self-addressed, stamped envelopes you received.

Thank you, and "good results" in your branch.

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Today my branch secured \_\_\_\_\_ daily 13-week, signed orders.

To date I have secured \_\_\_\_\_ daily 13-week, signed orders.

My branch goal is \_\_\_\_\_ new daily orders.

#### Direct Appeals to Carriers

Promotion material of a similar tone was directed to the carriers of both the *Journal-Herald* (morning) and the *Daily News* (evening), telling them how they might win valuable prizes and at the same time increase their regular income. The following letter to carriers of the *News* is typical:

**WHAT IS THE FIRST THING A PRIZE WINNER WANTS TO KNOW?**

Watch any prize winner when a contest is announced. The first question he asks himself is "Where can I get the orders I need to win my prize?"

He has the answer in a minute.

First, he makes a list of every "Sunday Only" customer on his route. He'll want to see these folks first because they are excellent prospects. They read the NEWS every Sunday and are already familiar with its many fine features. The prize winner knows now is an ideal time to ask them to read the DAILY NEWS.

Then he makes a list of every family on his route who does not read either the Daily or Sunday NEWS. He'll see every one of these now and ask them to enjoy the NEWS and help him to win his prize.

You'll notice prize winners do not eliminate a single nonreader from their prospect list. They know the family who said "No" the last time could be the first family to say "Yes" this time.

So prize winners play safe...they ask everyone to subscribe now.

Try the prize winner's plan on your route, see every prospect, don't miss a single family. You'll be glad you did, when the prizes are paid.

"Good prize winning"

The Dayton DAILY NEWS

Carriers need to have their memories jogged and their enthusiasm built up constantly. Jack Calvin, circulation manager of the Houston, Tex., *Post* (circulation 201,647, population 596,163) never lets his carriers forget their responsibilities to their customers and their many opportunities to obtain more subscribers. Small cards of varied colors with such terse messages as the following are sent to them at frequent intervals:

(1) **Read the HOUSTON POST Daily**

You will be able to build a Good Sales Tal kif you read the Houston POST daily . . . Sell the Features and Articles that you like to read in the Houston POST to your Prospects. Be sure that you Sell Yourself First on the POST and its features.

(2) **Be Successful! Grow! Grow!**

Every time you get one stop...make a promise to yourself to get TWO New Starts. You will always be successful in building your business and Profits if you keep your Promise. You have to Sell Yourself First.

(3) **Did You Use Your Telephone Today?**

You can make many calls on nonsubscribers by using your telephone... and selling people you meet on the streets, in cafes, etc. Progressive Distributors make a few calls every day by Telephone or Personal Calls. They sell themselves and their product, the Houston POST. Smile and the World Smiles with you.

The Oakland, Calif., *Tribune* (circulation 201,308, population 384,575) never misses an opportunity to relate in its news columns the outstanding activities of its carriers or achievements of former

carriers. "A Former Carrier Blossoms Into Novelist" was the three-column heading of a feature story in this newspaper's issue of Sunday, February 19, 1956. The opening paragraph said: "When Lew Lansworth came up for air after eight years of complete submergence in work on his novel, 'Over the River Charlie,' his first act of freedom was to hot-foot it back to his childhood town of Oakland, and his first port of call was the *Tribune*, where he took the initial steps in a widely varied and picturesque career as a paper carrier at \$3 a week." That is circulation promotion of a high order.

In all the carrier contests conducted by the *Oakland Tribune*, pictures are used in the news columns to acquaint readers with those who are leading. This builds high morale and adds needed recruits to the carrier force.

#### SUBSCRIBERS HELP TO BUILD CIRCULATION

Regular subscribers may be just as effective as staff members in building circulation for the newspaper. They need only to be "kept sold" on the paper they read. If they like it and make good use of it, they will recommend it to their neighbors and friends.

Many newspapers catch the eyes of readers with slogans carried just above or beneath the newspaper's title or at the top of the front page in the "dog ears." (The space remaining at the left and the right of the newspaper's name plate often is referred to as "dog ears.")

In small type just above the name plate of the Bolivar, Mo., *Free Press* (circulation 2,616, population 3,482) appears this line

**The Old Home Paper of Polk County —  
Established in 1868 — Still on The Job**

The Eldon, Mo., *Advertiser* (circulation 2,343, population 2,766) in a similar way tells readers it belongs to ABC and is

**A Missouri Blue Ribbon Paper, Rates AAA**

More personal is the sentence which stands out in the left "dog ear" of the Mexico, Mo., *Ledger*

**Your Name Has Been In The Ledger — It Will Be Again**

The Harriman, Tenn., *Record* (circulation 3,246, population 6,389) announces below its name plate an aggressive spirit

**Advancing Into The Future Boosting, Building, Benefiting**

Metropolitan papers, as well as weeklies and small dailies, carry slogans that help subscribers to "feel proud" of their paper. For the Atlanta, Ga., *Journal* (circulation 260,147, population 331,314) it is

**Covers Dixie Like The Dew**

For the St. Louis, Mo., *Globe-Democrat* (circulation 310,243, population 856,796) it is

### **One Hundred and Five Years of Public Service**

The Miami, Fla., *Herald* (circulation 316,990, population 249,276) claims to be

### **Florida's Most Complete Newspaper**

The "booster" attitude of a newspaper is contagious and often has been a prominent factor in lifting community spirit out of the doldrums. This has reflected in more pleasant community life and an increased volume of business.

### **Take Readers Into Confidence**

Anything that a newspaper may do to show appreciation of its readers is helpful in building circulation. Many papers invite the opinions of subscribers. Not all such suggestions can be heeded but it is always possible for the newspaper to reveal its pleasure at receiving them.

The Marshall, Tex., *News Messenger* (circulation 11,814, population 22,327) at the beginning of each year makes an annual report to its readers, summing up what the newspaper has done in the year just past, plus a look at "where it is going." This appears in the form of a full-page advertisement, which receives close readership because it is so personal in its tone, revealing the newspaper's honest desire to serve its readers better each succeeding year. These subheads in a full-page promotion one year outlined the wide scope of service given by the *News Messenger*:

**Reader and Advertiser Are Served by Gains**

**The News of Marshall Is Our No. 1 Concern**

**Your Newspaper Leads in Winning AP Awards**

**You Can Have Confidence in Our Columnists**

**We Have A Lot of Fun With Comics — Don't You?**

**Advertising Department Takes Its Laurels, Too**

**Special Writers Cover Off-Beaten-Track Events**

**It's a Pleasure To Be Of Aid To Worthy Drives**

**Many Signs of Progress as Marshall Goes Ahead**

At the advent of a new year, the Kansas City *Star* makes a similar report to its readers, explaining what goes into the *Star* to interest and benefit them. The services of the editorial department, business office, circulation department, advertising department, and engraving room of the newspaper, are explained.

**Advertise Features**

Advance notices to readers regarding features that are about to be introduced demonstrate special interest and are appreciated. These may be concerning a series of articles on local tax problems, the school situation, a series of religious articles (see Fig. 14.3), some new syndicated feature, a new comic, or a newly developing sequence in an old comic that might cause regular subscribers to read more closely and to talk to their friends more about the newspaper.

The newspaper's readers, already boosters, may have their enthusiasm for the newspaper further stimulated by special articles regarding progress being made in the community. Promotion advertise-



★

## “The Greatest Story Ever Told”

★

The Cleveland News is proud to present one of the most distinguished works of our time. This modern classic is endorsed by leaders of all faiths. If you have read this fascinating story—you'll want to read it again. If you haven't read it—then by all means don't miss it.

**Begins Ash Wednesday, Feb. 23**

in the  
***CLEVELAND NEWS***

Don't miss a single installment!  
Have The Cleveland News delivered to your home.

**Just Phone PROspect 1-4800...ask for Circulation Dept.**

FIG. 14.3 — The Cleveland, Ohio, News enjoys excellent response from this kind of promotion of special features.

ments featuring the various communities served by the newspaper have in numerous cases proved effective.

Material that readers themselves have written and contributed not only provides interesting reading for all patrons of the newspaper but it draws the contributing readers closer to the newspaper and makes them strong promoters. When publishers thus bring readers into cooperation with them in the making of a better newspaper they engage in splendid circulation promotion.

Readers are always ready and willing to contribute material for anniversary and progress editions. For its 50th anniversary edition, the Independence, Mo., *Examiner* (circulation 9,779, population 36,963) decided it would not emphasize the historic past, as is usually done, but instead portray the community as it is "today" and as its citizens would like it to be "tomorrow." Pictures, write-ups and advertisements of persons and organizations then active in community affairs took care of the "today" part of the edition, and a series of articles by community leaders on "The Three Outstanding Needs of Our Community and How They May Be Realized" provided the "tomorrow" angle. The articles were so thought provoking and constructive that they provided a splendid project program for the city's Chamber of Commerce. But for the newspaper the important result was that outstanding citizens who contributed were drawn closer to the newspaper and from then on undoubtedly were stronger supporters. A friendly reader can unknowingly sell many subscriptions for a newspaper! <sup>1</sup>

#### MAKE DIRECT APPEALS TO NONREADERS

Most of the promotion material put out by a newspaper is directed toward nonreaders. New people are constantly coming into a newspaper's community, and it takes time and well-pointed publicity to sell them on the community and the newspaper.

"Thousands of alert readers watch the *News* each week for local news, display advertisements and classified ads," said the Farmington, Mo., *News* (circulation 3,460, population 4,490) in an attractive advertisement which appeared in an issue sent as a sample copy to rural route patrons. "Year after year, decade after decade, the Farmington *News* goes into the homes of its subscribers to bring them the latest news from the St. Francois County seat . . . and to help them with their shopping by means of timely advertisements placed in our columns by this area's progressive, dependable merchants. You and your family will profit, too, by reading this newspaper regularly."

The Dayton, Ohio, *Daily News* invites newcomers to compare it with other newspapers serving the community. Prospects are en-

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<sup>1</sup> Frank W. Rucker and Herbert Lee Williams, *Newspaper Organization and Management*, Iowa State College Press, Ames, Iowa, 1955, p. 422.

couraged to take it for four weeks in order that a careful comparison may be made over a period of time. This offer is introduced in an attractive pamphlet, which asks: "Which newspaper offers your family . . . the most complete newspaper reading enjoyment? the latest news? the most complete news coverage? the greatest variety of informative, entertaining features? exclusive advertising news to show you where and when to buy for full value? the largest selection of the nation's favorite comics for family entertainment and enjoyment? Which newspaper will keep your family better informed and provide the complete reading enjoyment you want 7 days a week?" Then it suggests: "Read and compare the *Daily News* for four weeks! Then decide yourself. The friendly *News* representative who presented this invitation will gladly start your comparison copies of the *News* today. You'll be pleased with this efficient service. You and your family will have four interesting weeks to determine why *the Daily News* offers your family the most complete reading enjoyment." On the back page of the pamphlet is a description of several of the newspaper's outstanding features.

#### **Stress Family Reading**

The Cleveland, Ohio, *Plain Dealer* (circulation 308,984, population 914,808) also uses promotion material strongly emphasizing "good reading for all the family" (see Fig. 14.4). A personal letter from John F. Brennan, the circulation manager, to a carefully selected list of nonsubscribers, carries a cartoon showing the family at breakfast, with each of the four members eagerly reading a section of the paper. "The PLAIN DEALER is a friendly affair," the letter begins, and continues:

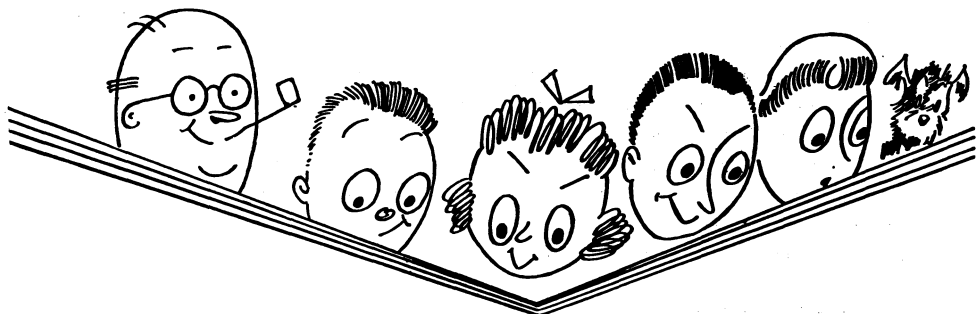
Breakfast tastes better when seasoned with interesting reading. Whether it's news of the nation or of your neighbor, events of interest and importance are reported fully and faithfully in the PLAIN DEALER. Its columns offer a wholesome helping of news and features to satisfy the tastes of every member of your family.

For mother and daughter, the woman's world revolves around the food, fashion and furnishings columns of the PLAIN DEALER. News of the social whirl, PTA activities and beauty hints is as fresh as the morning.

For father and son, the sports pages capture the drama and excitement of the gridiron and diamond, field and stream. The financial and business pages report the growing strength of Cleveland's economic sinews. And whether you agree with them or not, the editorials present a point of view which has prompted progress.

For the youngsters, the PLAIN DEALER offers education with a frosting of fun. Since the next generation cannot live by cereal alone, we suggest that you flavor their diet of activities with a healthy serving of good reading. A few moments with Andy the answer man, Uncle Ray, the Hobby Club and the funnies is an interesting - and instructive way to start the day.





# Good Reading for all the family

A page of boys' and girls' activities and opinions—from nursery to high school age—there is action and interest for every young Clevelander on the **PLAIN DEALER BOYS' AND GIRLS' PAGE** every Saturday.

Three pages of Radio and TV news—with authoritative comments and reviews to help you choose the very best in living room entertainment—plus a complete TV schedule for the following week. News of real estate, suburban developments, household hints and gardening await you.

Pictures and stories of women active in sports, P. T. A. and club work. And for the outdoor sportsman—stories and advice on hunting and fishing. Because every family is interested in religious news, your **Saturday PLAIN DEALER** contains complete coverage of church activities including listings of Sunday services.



keep your eye on the

## *Saturday* Plain Dealer

FIG. 14.4 — Promotion used by the Cleveland, Ohio, **Plain Dealer** to encourage family reading.

By reading the **PLAIN DEALER** you hold a world of information and entertainment in your hands. And it's as near as your front door.

Call MAIN 1-4500 today and ask for Circulation. A courteous carrier boy will deliver your **PLAIN DEALER** in time for tomorrow's breakfast.

In a narrow column at the left side of the letter are listed the features of greatest interest to "Mother," "Dad," and "Boys and Girls."

Newly married couples in the neighborhood of Mosinee, Wis., immediately are made acquainted with the *Mosinee Times* (circulation 1,678, population 1,453). As soon as the wedding story appears in the newspaper, Francis Schweinler, editor and publisher, sends the couple an attractive letter, printed in color, with the congratulatory message:

May we add our congratulations and best wishes to those of your friends on the occasion of your recent marriage. We sincerely hope that you'll have many years of happiness and success together and that the community will be a better place because of your event.

As a wedding present we will be sending you a free subscription to the *Mosinee Times* during the coming year, and we hope that in the years ahead we'll have only happy moments in your lives to record in the news columns of your home-town newspaper.

Enclosed with the letter is a signed receipt for a year's subscription. Mr. Schweinler says that 75 per cent of those receiving the letter renew subscriptions when they expire.

Pleasing results are obtained usually when the promotion is directed to a certain group or area. An appeal to farmers would be entirely different from one directed to city residents. Adults, too, have different interests from youth.

#### **Emphasize Public's Acceptance**

The tendency of people to "follow the crowd" is just as evident in building circulation as elsewhere. When a newspaper's acceptance by the public is generally recognized it is well on its way to rapid circulation gains. "Look what's happening," says the Detroit, Mich., *Free Press* (circulation 456,768, population 1,894,568) in a large 4-page broadside, "More Detroit newspaper readers are now ordering the morning and Sunday *Free Press* home-delivered than ever before." Then it goes on to explain that "this trend to the *Free Press* is due to improved and enlarged editorial content, a modernization of the newspaper plant and an extension of its home-delivery distribution operation."

Most people like to do their own thinking. Consequently, publishers who take an independent stand in politics have found it advantageous to emphasize that fact in their promotional material. The Toledo, Ohio, *Blade* (circulation 193,863, population 303,616) mailed to nonreaders in its area a large handsomely printed declaration of its editorial principles, which said: "In Toledo, the *Blade* is known and respected for its political independence . . . Like all good newspapers nowadays we present both sides of controversies in our news columns so that the readers can use their own judgment in coming to an informed opinion . . . This policy, we are told, sometimes baffles newcomers to the city when they first start reading our paper . . . In time, however, most of the new readers get used to it and accept the *Blade* as do the other people of the community, for what it is—an independent newspaper which calls its shots as it sees them without prejudice and without bias."

Some weeklies have waged valiant battles against daily competitors crowding into their fields. Others so thoroughly promote themselves that possible competition has no interest in ever entering their fields. The Washington, N. J., *Star* (circulation 5,725, population 4,802) states a situation well in a 4-page, self-promotion circular: "A single copy of a weekly newspaper as influential as the *Star* is read and absorbed in the seclusion and leisure of small towns where it exercises a greater pull on its readers than the daily."

**CIRCULATION GROWTH INCREASES ADVERTISING POTENTIAL**

Circulation sells advertising. When a newspaper, through promotion of its features and services along with organized effort, has developed a creditable circulation it has on its hands still another promotion project in which circulation remains the important subject. Advertisers must be told how widely and effectively their merchandise may be sold in the area served by the newspaper.

This type of promotion usually takes the form of brochures and other mailings that may be sent direct to prospective advertisers and advertising agencies. However, it is also good material for the advertising and news columns of the newspaper, where it may be seen by advertisers and readers alike. Subscribers are pleased to learn they are among so many hundreds and thousands who read the paper they like and patronize.

**Here's news the like of which Michigan hasn't seen for 25 years** was blazed in headlines across the front page of a large brochure put out by the Detroit *Free Press* when in the 1956 midyear it chalked up a gain of 23,216 in circulation over that of the previous six-months period. "*Free Press* advertisers are experiencing new selling power and sales impact that gets greater results than ever before," it explained.

The Memphis, Tenn., *Commercial Appeal* and *Press-Scimitar* (combined circulation 350,536, population 396,000) use attractive and convincing charts to show how they serve merchants and manufacturers in reaching a 76-county market (see Fig. 14.5).

When in 1956 the Independence, Mo., *Examiner* went over 10,000 circulation for the first time, it announced the achievement to readers and advertisers in a striking full-page advertisement.

Small papers, as well as large ones, may advantageously advertise their circulation gains. When a newspaper adds 100, 500, or 1,000 subscribers in a brief time, or when its circulation climbs over its first 1,000, 5,000, 10,000, or 25,000 mark, it has something to talk about.

**IMPROVED COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS HELP CIRCULATION PROMOTION**

Many kinds of promotion help build good will for the newspaper. In addition to that directed particularly to newspaper employees, readers, nonreaders and advertisers, is promotion directed to all elements of the community. Whenever a newspaper fosters any movement or project that benefits its community it promotes itself.

"The old talent show is still a good circulation gimmick," said G. Frohman Johnson, circulation promotion director of the Charleston, W. Va., *Daily Mail* (circulation 57,996, population 73,501) when his



**THIS IS THE KIND OF LEADERSHIP  
YOUR 2 MEMPHIS NEWSPAPERS  
OFFER YOU TODAY IN:**

**76 COUNTY MEMPHIS MARKET**

Percentage of families covered by nine leading magazines and Memphis' TWO GREAT NEWSPAPERS in the two billion dollar Memphis Market area (Memphis and Shelby County included). Note that, in the Memphis Market, the two Memphis Newspapers used in optional combination offer the advertiser approximately 50% more coverage than all nine of the magazines shown below combined!

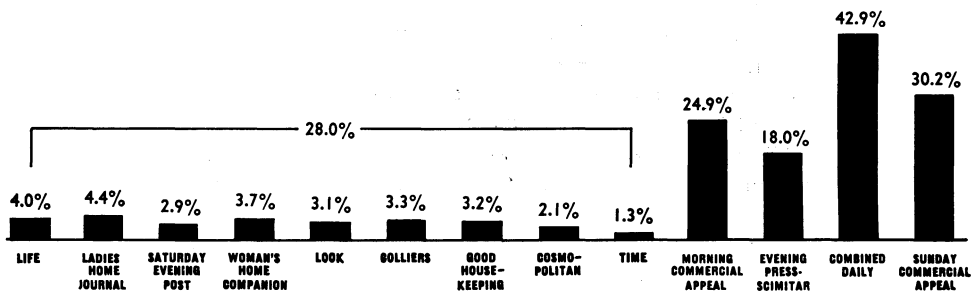


FIG. 14.5 — Chart used by the Memphis, Tenn., **Commercial Appeal** and **Press-Scimitar** to show circulation strength.

newspaper had completed a 20-week series of talent shows which brought definite circulation returns to the newspaper as well as handsome profits to sponsoring organizations. The newspaper screened 344 acts, in which 568 youngsters took part. One hundred and eighty-eight of the 344 acts were put into shows, which were played before audiences totaling 8,000. The final show, given on a hot July night, drew 1,500 people. The *Mail* paid all the expenses. Profits, which amounted to \$2,200, went to sponsoring organizations.

The Toledo *Blade* uses many promotion ideas to build up a firm contact with the people of its community. Whenever a baby is born, it sends to the parents a dozen tiny birth announcement cards, complete with envelopes — blue ones for the boy, pink ones for the girl. The announcements are sent in an envelope marked "Congratulations" and simulate the front page of the *Blade*. It is the Home Edition, naturally, and one ear (box on either side of the title line) gives the weather as "probably damp." "City Welcomes New Baby," proclaims the headline, and there is a large baby picture. Inside is room for the baby's name, date of birth, weight and parents' names. With this goes

an explanation of the gift. Nothing could be much better than this to establish a warm relationship between baby's parents and the newspaper.

The Redwood Falls, Minn., *Gazette* (circulation 5,076, population 3,813) ran a series of life stories of prominent citizens, which increased bulk sales and drew in added subscriptions.

The Fullerton, Nebr., *Nance County Journal* (circulation 1,756, population 1,520) builds good will by sending single copies to all hospital patients from Fullerton and its trade area. Copy wrappers carry this message: "How are you today? The Journal trusts that your stay in the hospital will be short and that you soon will be home again. We hope this issue will help you pass the idle hours."

Occasionally the Elmont, N. Y., *El Monitor* (circulation 3,010, population 33,715) sends marked copies to persons whose names are used in news stories. Clipped to the paper is a small, colorful leaflet, announcing: "Your name is in this issue. Even if you are already a subscriber, we thought you would like this extra copy." For nonsubscribers, the leaflet lists features that regular readers enjoy, and suggests that they subscribe.

During one holiday season the Lansing, Ill., *Journal* (circulation 2,474, population 8,682) offered subscribers the privilege of selecting a free Christmas tree from a special shipment of beautiful trees ranging from four to six feet in height.

The Houlton, Maine, *Pioneer Times* (circulation 3,664, population 8,377) wins the good will of young people and their parents by sponsoring a Little League baseball team, and by underwriting a Recreation League for teams made up of "small fry."

The Woodhaven (Jamaica), N. Y., *Leader-Observer* (circulation 3,650, population 127,000) sends marked copies to parents whenever it carries news about service men.

Science Fairs, sponsored by newspapers in their own communities, have been steppingstones to statewide science fairs of great value and importance. Rhode Island newspapers were instrumental in providing for their state a Science Fair, in which more than 700 students from fifty or sixty public schools exhibited experiments and inventions. It ran for three days with an average daily attendance of 12,000.

The Salt Lake City, Utah, *Tribune* (circulation 97,938, population 182,121) has won a warm spot in the hearts of Salt Lake City people by helping to beautify the city and by promoting sports and recreation. It has sponsored classes in gardening, a camera carnival, a library and information service, a tennis tournament, a community baseball league, a ski show and a swimming school. A square dance jamboree on a parking lot drew 4,000 participants and 8,000 spectators.

One year the Michigan City, Ind., *News-Dispatch* (circulation 13,913, population 28,395) sponsored a Hi Neighbor Club and a con-

tinuing program of events for 5,000 children of its community. The Cape Girardeau, Mo., *Southeast Missourian* (circulation 14,677, population 21,578) has provided concerts by the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and the U. S. Marine Band.

Some papers operate speaker's bureaus, and set up speaking engagements for their editors and reporters. The Minneapolis papers go a step further: when they are asked to supply a speaker for a civic luncheon or a large gathering in their community, they put on what they call a "flying circus" and take out not one but several speakers, each of whom tells something about what he or she does on the newspaper.

It is not unusual for newspapers to sponsor movements of this kind for the benefit of their communities. They involve expense but they yield returns in good will and circulation.

#### **Pictures Strengthen Community Ties**

Photography and inexpensive engraving have been of great assistance to weeklies and small dailies in building circulation. Residents of the newspaper's home community like to see in print pictures of themselves, their families and the organizations they represent.

To obtain subscribers from residents of a new section being developed on the outskirts of Hammonton, N. J., the *News* (circulation 3,322, population 8,411) sent a photographer into the area with instructions to take pictures of everything in sight — people, homes, human interest situations and the like. The pictures were later run in a feature page explaining the new development and welcoming its residents to Hammonton. Soon a correspondent was engaged and a man was sent in to solicit subscriptions. The publisher continued to give good news coverage and circulation developed rapidly in a new territory.

At another time the Hammonton *News* found pictures effective in reaching many homes through children in the schools. For many years at commencement time it ran a picture of the graduating class of the town's high school. But later it ran pictures of the graduates of every school in the county. It sent its photographer to all the four-room and smaller schools to take pictures. In one place there were only three graduates, but the picture appeared in the newspaper.

With a new or renewed subscription, the Forest Grove, Ore., *Washington County News-Times* (circulation 3,441, population 4,343) gave a 5x7 portrait. Pictures were taken at a local commercial studio.

Pictures should be filed in the office, because occasions often arise in which they may be used again, or at least they may serve a good-will turn, as in the case of the Monett, Mo., *Times* (circulation 3,995, population 4,771). Instead of throwing individual, family and group

pictures away when they had once been used, the publisher sent them out in the mail with this note: "Dear Friend: Several days ago we were sorting out some pictures which had appeared in past issues of the *Times* and we came across the one enclosed which pictures either you or some member of your family. Please accept it with my compliments and best wishes. Cordially, Ken Meuser, Publisher."

The Erie, Ill., *Review* (circulation 2,120, population 1,180) weeded out its picture file preceding a Parent-Teacher Association carnival. The newspaper then set up a booth at the carnival and sold the pictures at 10 cents each, the proceeds going to the PTA. The idea proved popular and was good promotion for the newspaper.

### **Varied Techniques Adaptable to Many Newspapers**

Many weeklies, despite the fact that they may have little money to use in promotion campaigns, have developed promotion ideas highly successful in building greater circulation. The following promotion ideas have been used to good advantage by both daily and weekly newspapers:

1. Make a motion picture film of newspaper force at work and show it to civic groups.
2. Conduct a "Most Valuable Citizen" contest.
3. Sponsor a Christmas home-lighting contest.
4. Make talks on newspaper work at service club luncheons.
5. Sponsor an annual Spring Cleanup drive.
6. Cooperate with the YMCA and Red Cross in a "Learn to Swim" campaign.
7. Develop a system of greeting new arrivals in the community by delivering to them the newspaper for a week or so; also mail to them a letter, welcoming them to the community.
8. Send a number of free copies to hospitals for distribution to patients.
9. Run once a week a guest editorial with picture of writer.
10. Run holiday recipes of different nationalities, enlivened with pictures of the contributors in appropriate native dress.
11. Conduct a "Ten Best-Dressed Women" contest.
12. Conduct street quizzes and run answers with pictures of persons interviewed.
13. Run a "Who's Who" feature on community leaders.
14. Run a recipe section with pictures of local contributors.
15. Sponsor a "mutt dog" parade, offering prizes for dog with shortest nose, longest ears, shortest tail, etc.
16. Sponsor a health forum in community.
17. Run a series of pre-Lenten articles covering the subject "Why I Believe in God" or "What Religion Means To Our Family."

18. Run a column entitled "The Big Hand," in which are applauded persons who have done something outstanding for the community.
19. Give 50th anniversary dinners for couples celebrating their golden weddings.
20. Conduct a display booth for the newspaper at county fairs.
21. Prepare and distribute a neat folder showing members of staff at work.
22. Honor prize-winning 4-H Club boys and girls at a banquet.
23. Sponsor a folk song festival.
24. If there is a lake nearby, sponsor a fishing rodeo.
25. Sponsor a Three-Quarter Century Club for citizens 75 years old and over.
26. Sponsor a hobby show.
27. If the paper is published in a major- or minor-league town, sponsor a baseball class for women fans.
28. Sponsor an annual Halloween celebration for children of community.
29. Take aerial pictures of rural towns in circulation area and run them in newspaper.
30. Sponsor a "Happy Birthday Club" by extending congratulations each week to children of community who have birthdays.

### **Checking and Conserving Results Obtained**

Circulation-building campaigns with established time limits are easier to check than the continuous type of promotion, but a conscientious analysis of results is necessary to guide future planning. It is equally important to study circulation fluctuations or trends following the close of a campaign to make certain the gains are being conserved. Often the greater benefits and profits from organized efforts will not be apparent immediately, but will come in years following the campaign. On the other hand, many of the immediate benefits may be lost if the newspaper does not measure up to the expectations of new subscribers. If the news department lets down on its efforts to supply a satisfactory paper, or the circulation department fails to maintain satisfactory delivery service, subscribers become disgruntled and not only drop the paper, but their destructive criticism influences other people to feel the same way. Loss of prestige is one of the most difficult obstacles for a newspaper to overcome.

The greatest testimony to the value of any promotion effort is permanent results.