

“Circulation managers, as a rule, like to take credit for circulation gains made by their newspapers, but many of us fail to give due recognition to other departments of the newspaper that really assist in these gains.”

— FRANK J. NOLAN,
Circulation Manager,
Rockford, Ill.,
Star and Register-Republic

CHAPTER 20

Working With Other Departments

CIRCULATION, ADVERTISING AND NEWS DEPARTMENTS of a newspaper must understand the dependence of each upon the others to obtain the best results in any one of these departments. Good coverage and efficient handling of the news build circulation, and creditable circulation builds advertising volume. When faithful and efficient performance of duty in each department is supplemented with carefully planned cooperation between the three, and the mechanical department adds its best performance, a great newspaper is produced.

CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT IS COORDINATOR

The department most interested in developing this cooperation is the circulation department. It stands in the middle, dependent to a great degree on what the news department does and responsible for much of what the advertising department is able to accomplish. It is incumbent upon the circulation manager and members of his force, therefore, to have a harmonious working relationship with news editors, reporters, advertising managers and salesmen. The mechanical department also must understand its part in producing a newspaper attractive and easy to read. When this cooperation is accomplished, all departments become circulation conscious, and eleven important results are obtained:

1. The news department becomes conscious of its influence on circulation and increases its efforts to produce a newsier paper.
2. The news department learns from the circulation department what types of stories are most interesting to subscribers.
3. The circulation department, realizing the importance of news

in developing circulation, gives tips and items to the news department.

4. The circulation department, learning from subscribers what features are most liked, conveys this information to the one who selects features.

5. The editorial department notifies the circulation department whenever a great story is to break or when an outstanding feature starts in the paper, so that the circulation department can prepare for extra street and newsstand sales.

6. The editorial and advertising departments work with the circulation department in adjusting press times to meet changing conditions.

7. The editorial department provides special news stories for areas in which circulation campaigns are conducted.

8. The news department publicizes activities of carriers.

9. The advertising department prepares copy and devotes space to keep regular readers sold on the paper and to make regular subscribers of those who occasionally buy copies at newsstands.

10. The mechanical department, realizing the strong effect of good typography, display, and balance of news and advertising, cooperates with the news and advertising departments in developing the desired effects.

11. The circulation, news, and mechanical departments, realizing the high percentage of revenue provided by the advertising department for salaries and equipment and its contribution to their personal comfort and welfare, give tips to advertising salesmen and encourage merchant friends to advertise.

The newspaper large enough to warrant a promotion department finds it will do more for circulation than for any other department. This relationship already has been discussed in Chapter 14 and is mentioned here only to re-emphasize its importance in a general discussion of the ways in which each department of the newspaper helps the circulation department and vice versa.

Helps News Department To Visualize Readers

One of the important responsibilities of the circulation department is to paint for the news department a picture of the great host of people within the community eagerly waiting for the news of the day. Some turn immediately to the sports page, others to the comics, others to the food advertisements, but most of them scan first the front page to read the headlines in large type. Still others turn at once to the classified page, thinking they might find ways to improve their positions — better housing, better jobs, or better prices for things they are needing. All are looking for something that will satisfy their interests and their wants. It is for these persons of many desires the newspaper is published and distributed.

If people's needs are not answered; if the editors and reporters lose touch with the vast crowd they write for each day; if they become indifferent to reader's interests, *circulation drops*. And those who stop reading the paper are hard to bring back.

Editors need to understand the great turnover that takes place in circulation, how many people stop buying the paper when the editorial quality sags. The holiday and Saturday slumps are surprising to most editorial workers. If those who collect and write the news do not understand this, the circulation department is handicapped in swelling the daily totals. As Lee Hills, executive editor of the Miami, Fla., *Herald* (circulation 296,781, population 249,276) once said: "It's worth a lot of effort to have the editorial department constantly on its toes to offset every possible loss, to capitalize on every gain. It's easier to avoid a cancellation than to resell a subscriber."

KNOWS READERS' WANTS

The circulation department, in closer contact with the reading public, knows better than the news department what subscribers like and want. The best indicator of a newspaper's popularity is its circulation. It goes up when the news department produces a paper that readers want and the circulation service is good. When circulation goes down, the publisher goes to the circulation manager, whose men know the news likes and dislikes of people they serve and from whom they collect.

Lee Hills, who knows this problem well, says: "Circulation men are the sales managers of the publishing industry, and sales managers are playing a bigger role in all industries than they did a decade or two ago. They have a bigger say in product design. In the auto industry, their judgment of what the public wants and will buy is an important factor in deciding what the designer will build. Sales managers do not have the final say because, as the head of one of the big automobile companies told me recently, 'they'd want so many things on the product we couldn't sell at a profit.' It's the same with newspapers. Not everything that the circulation department might want done with the product to make it easier to sell can be done, or we might go broke. But many things can be done, and one of the circulation manager's sales jobs is to keep selling the editor on needed changes and improvements."¹

GIVES TIPS TO NEWS DEPARTMENT

Realizing that giving the news is the first step toward building circulation, members of the circulation department themselves should be alert to news as they go about their business of obtaining subscriptions. A little story about the person called upon not only helps

¹ *Circulation Management*, Sept., 1954, pp. 14, 15.

to sell the newspaper to him or her but establishes a nice personal contact that will be of value in future relationships. No one connected with the newspaper is in closer touch with building projects than the district circulation manager or the solicitor.

All members of the circulation staff should provide story tips about weddings, births, family reunions, birthday parties, and other events in their homes and their neighbors' homes. They should report activities of organizations to which they belong. Truck drivers for the circulation department who learn of highway and other accidents should report them quickly to the news department. Some newspapers equip their district circulation men with cameras and by that means many timely pictures are brought into the news columns.

"The circulation department is becoming the right hand of the editorial department in searching out news and features," says William J. Foote, managing editor of the Hartford, Conn., *Courant* (circulation 97,224, population 177,397). "Some of our best news pictures have come from circulation men who generally manage to have a camera around when something newsworthy happens on their routes. One of the very nicest feature pictures we had one summer was the result of a circulation department tip that one of our carriers was delivering papers at a yacht anchorage from an outboard motor boat."

Carriers' Activities Make News

Interesting features for the news columns that will at the same time provide good circulation promotion can be developed in stories about activities and hobbies of the newspapers' carriers. Supervisors and district managers can direct reporters to many interviews with carriers that will bring forth genuine human interest material. Furthermore, such publicity keeps good carriers on the routes and makes other boys eager for leases.

The Hartford *Courant* considers carrier activities as Page 1 material and uses pictures whenever possible. Reporters are told to contact supervisors for stories. It is a good practice for daily newspapers to give news space to their carriers at advisable opportunities.

National Newspaperboy Day requires the cooperation of the news and circulation departments to make it a success. This national observance is developed through cooperation of many organizations and individuals, but only by adapting it to local conditions and actually doing something with and for carriers can the individual newspaper gain much benefit in its own field. This is largely up to the news department.

National Newspaperboy Day in 1955 drew wide publicity by honoring President Eisenhower as a former newspaperboy. On behalf of more than a million of "Today's Newspaperboys" a handsome

trophy was presented to the President as "Yesterday's Newspaperboy — Today's Leader." When the local newspaper can honor a prominent citizen with a gesture of this kind it gives to the carriers a feeling of distinction and pride.

The Ohio Newspaper Association put the newspaperboy achievement story in headlines all over the state in 1956, when it sponsored the Fourth Annual Glenn L. Cox Newspaperboy Achievement Award. Judges, including business, school and judicial leaders, circulation managers and newspaper publishers, looked over the records of 69 boys from 39 Ohio daily newspapers before selecting the two winning boys and several boys for honorable mention. This award is named in honor of the circulation consultant to the Ohio Newspaper Association and former circulation manager of the Dayton, Ohio, *Daily News* (circulation 154,532, population 243,870).

Millard Cope, editor and publisher of the Marshall, Tex., *News Messenger* (circulation 11,814, population 22,327) relies heavily upon his circulation department for news tips. "Carrier boys are the source of a great wealth of small stories," he says. "They know of accidents, the unusual slants on fires and other events where they wiggle right into the crowds. The circulation department knows of an influx of population for one reason or another; the members of that department are the first to sense industrial layoffs; they have their hands on the pulse of the community because they contact so many persons."²

Members of the circulation department alert to helping the news department make the news columns more interesting thereby make the work of their own department easier and more fruitful.

CAN AID IN SELECTING FEATURES

It is sound practice for the editorial and circulation departments to discuss and judge features together. The circulation manager and his district managers know also what comics and other features are making a hit with the readers. The news department, unless willing to endure the wrath of the circulation department, would hardly dare to discontinue a comic without discussing the matter with the circulation department.

Lee Hills made a statement appropriate to this point at an annual meeting of the International Circulation Managers Association in Daytona Beach, Fla.: "You circulation managers can help your editor if you'll tell him promptly and factually about all complaints that circulation hears; about 'phony' correspondents in outlying areas who are missing stories, making enemies or promoting themselves and friends; about competitive weaknesses which you spot."

² Frank W. Rucker and Herbert Lee Williams, *Newspaper Organization and Management*, Iowa State College Press, Ames, Iowa, 1955, p. 469.

But he threw out this warning: "A circulation man's opinion may not be worth any more than an editor's. Anyone who claims to know just what the public wants, or that his wife is a true barometer of the mass market, is crazy. You sales managers must recognize that all the comics and columns and features and special series and promotional pieces in the world will not make a good newspaper. News is what does it."

For metropolitan papers the Sunday issue is a strong factor in circulation development, and for most papers the Saturday issue is a problem. Outstanding features are wanted for the Sunday issue to increase the newsstand and street sales. The Saturday issue, which carries little advertising, usually is sent to press early with incomplete coverage of the day's happenings. The Saturday issue gets less attention than any other issue of the week not only because it contains less but because people on Saturday are more inclined toward recreation and shopping than to newspaper reading. Single sales drop on the Saturday issue and efforts are directed toward making up the Saturday loss with increased sales of the Sunday paper.

News Department Cooperates in Planning

It is important for the circulation department to know instantly when a big story is breaking in the day's issue or a new feature is to start in order that it may be prepared to push sales. When the news makes big headlines, the entire force of the circulation department must be alerted. Orders must be given for increased press runs; additional help is needed in the delivery department and more street salesmen are required.

The vigilant circulation manager, in fact, looks over Page 1 dummies to see what is coming up in order to be prepared. Coordination of the two departments in handling such situations is essential for the survival of the paper, particularly when competition is keen.

NEWS DEPARTMENT HELPS IN CAMPAIGNS

The news department contributes importantly in the cultivation of new circulation areas.

When the Marquette, Mich., *Mining Journal* (circulation 14,865, population 17,202) launched a campaign to build circulation on rural routes and in outlying towns, the news department assisted with publicity. F. E. Harkin, the circulation manager, was allowed to select the neighborhood correspondents, and he chose persons who in addition to writing the news would sell subscriptions and oversee delivery in their respective areas.

The La Crosse, Wis., *Tribune* (circulation 33,537, population 47,535) stimulated circulation in its suburban trade area when the news department took aerial views of towns and published them.

Famous landmarks, post offices, schools, churches, weekly newspaper offices, factories, and other places of interest were properly identified. One week before the pictures appeared, doorknob hangers describing the coming feature were distributed by the circulation department to nonreader homes announcing also a "one week free" offer with a six weeks order.

The news department also may help by developing a news section featuring a definite community and thereby draw subscribers from that area. Plans should be made, however, to continue whatever news service is instituted during a circulation campaign.

Weekly and small daily newspapers have developed rural circulation by having a reporter accompany the rural solicitor on trips through the county. While the solicitor is giving his sales talk to the man of the home the reporter may be drawing a news story from the farmer's wife concerning the egg-laying records of her hens. News items of this kind gathered along with orders for the paper are effective in holding subscribers.

Advertising Department Works Closely With Circulation

Because success in selling advertising depends on a creditable circulation showing, the circulation department has little difficulty in obtaining help from the advertising department. Much of the promotion carried on through the newspaper's own columns pertains to circulation. Regular readers, kept constantly informed concerning the many features and services the newspaper offers, become good salesmen themselves and often induce neighbors and friends to subscribe. They know from their own reading that it is an interesting paper but when some good sales talk can be given to them in effective promotion, they expound the paper's merits to their acquaintances with more interest and fervor.

Attractive promotion advertising helps regularly employed solicitors become more enthusiastic about selling. As one publisher puts it: "The first customers we need to sell and keep sold are the circulation sales people themselves; the second are all the rest of the newspaper's employees. And it's important to sell them on the whole newspaper, not just the special features."

Carriers obtain much of their sales talk from facts presented by the advertising department in promotion ads.

Advertisements in large display type of department stores and food markets presenting wanted items at attractive prices are strong factors in selling the newspaper. No less influential are small classified ads, answering readers' many wants.

ADVERTISING MANAGER WANTS FACTS

On the other hand, the circulation manager can be of great help to the advertising manager and the two should work closely together.

Above all else, the advertising department wants a bona fide circulation, one that will produce results for advertisers, one that its salesmen can talk about with assurance and enthusiasm to merchants, manufacturers and advertising agencies.

"The advertising manager wants a circulation that is tops in at least one, if not all, of three selling factors: tops in coverage, tops in selectivity and tops in value," says Martin Livingstone, advertising manager of the Halifax, Nova Scotia, *Chronicle Herald* (circulation 63,479, population 90,871). And he describes four kinds of information the advertising manager wants to pass on to his clients:

1. A coverage analysis for the neighborhoods and communities served by his paper — how much circulation there is in each section and suburb of the city and in each of the other communities in the trade area.

2. The total of home deliveries.

3. Facts about subscribers — how many own their homes; how many families have more than one member employed; what percentage owns cars, television sets, refrigerators, washers, radios, oil or gas furnaces; what percentage travels, either summer or winter, and where and how.

4. Is coverage of retail trading area outside city zone increasing? This is particularly influential in obtaining more national advertising.

George B. Tobi, business manager of the Jacksonville, Fla., *Journal* (circulation 61,652, population 204,517) stresses that ". . . circulation men, editors and advertising men are all equally important parts of the team which produces and distributes American newspapers. The advertising department must have the delivery service and coverage provided by the circulation department. But it also should be recognized that the advertising pages, with their columns of foods, fashions and other information from local merchants, are of great help to the circulation men in their subscription selling."

Mechanical Department Gives Strength to Sales

The mechanical department is in a position to assist greatly both the advertising and circulation departments in their selling. The way in which an ad is set helps about as much as what it contains in bringing results for the advertiser and in increasing the volume used. The typographical attractiveness of the newspaper is a great aid in building circulation. Clear type for headlines and straight matter wins favor because it is easy to read. Good balance of headlines and pictures for news pages and striking illustrations and color effects in advertisements draw instant attention and add to the reader's satisfaction that he is subscribing to a top-notch newspaper.

The circulation department should, at every opportunity, point

out to the mechanical department the vital part it plays in building circulation.

ALL DEPARTMENTS CONCUR IN CERTAIN DECISIONS

A special edition to celebrate an anniversary or community event requires close cooperation between all departments — news, circulation, advertising and mechanical. The circulation manager can give good counsel to the news editor on what such an issue should contain to assure large reader demand. Those in the circulation department probably know better than newsmen the interests of the various elements in the town's population. They know what will sell papers in the suburbs and rural areas, what kind of features sell best downtown, what interests the women of the homes and what catches the eye with the menfolks.

The circulation department needs to know the full contents of every special edition — just what is in every section — every advertisement as well as every news story or feature, because all will influence sales on the day the edition comes out.

The time of going to press has a great influence on circulation. This is a matter to be determined not by management alone but by the general manager, news manager, circulation manager, and mechanical superintendent because it requires the judgment and the united efforts of all. Certainly the subscribers' wishes also must be considered. People want their papers delivered at times convenient for them to read before going to other appointments. Press time must allow delivery of evening papers before dinner and morning papers before breakfast.

In order to reach persons living at great distances, some papers must be run from the press earlier than others. The circulation department knows exactly when papers must be in the trucks to go to distant subscribers to reach them at a convenient reading hour.

Occasionally weather conditions develop to compel slow transit on the streets and highways. The circulation department should decide when an edition is to be held up or when it is to go early because of weather or other conditions, and the editorial, advertising and mechanical departments should do all they can to meet the necessary deadline.

It is important to have a press time that, barring unusual circumstances, will allow delivery of the paper to subscribers at the same time each day for irregularity can cause much loss in circulation. Readers are never satisfied with a paper that reaches them at 5 o'clock on some days and at 7 o'clock on others. They live by fairly regular schedules and they want to read their paper at regular hours. They like to know that the paper will be at their doorstep at the same moment each day. That makes for satisfied customers.

While equipment and finance are important in promoting circulation, it is really the close cooperation of everybody connected with the newspaper that assures success. It is the everlasting teamwork of every person that wins in the long run.

When someone wrote the following familiar lines,³ it is quite certain he had no idea of how well they apply in the working relationship needed in a circulation department, but they hit the mark:

It is not the guns or armaments
Or money they can pay;
It's the close cooperation
That makes them win the day.
It is not the individual
Nor the army as a whole
But the everlastin' teamwork
Of every bloomin' soul.

³ From poem entitled *Cooperation*. These lines have been attributed to several writers, but they were claimed for J. Mason Knox in a letter from his wife to the *New York Times*, according to *The Home Book of Quotations* (Edited by Burton Stevenson), Dodd, Mead & Co., N. Y., 8th ed., 1956, p. 1862.