

Introducing The OCNA's Hall Of Fame Award

The Ontario Community Newspapers Association (OCNA) is excited to announce its newest initiative, the Hall of Fame Award! This Award will recognize and celebrate individuals who have made exemplary contributions to Ontario's community newspapers. Inductees will be respected community news professionals who have remained passionate about the industry throughout challenges, opportunities and changes. They will be leaders who have helped community newspapers adapt and grow.

Nominees are encouraged from all aspects of the industry, including but not limited to: editorial, advertising, publishing, production, circulation, finance, sales or design. The Award may also be given posthumously.

Nominees shall:

- have a proven record of outstanding achievements in the Ontario community newspaper industry
- have demonstrated leadership or innovation within the Ontario community newspaper industry
- have contributed to the overall health and success of community newspapers
- be well respected in the business and community
- be role models and inspirations for future generations of community newspaper leaders

The recipient(s) of the Hall of Fame Award will be honoured and celebrated at the BNC Awards Gala on Friday, April 3.

Visit www.ocna.org/hall-of-fame-award to download the nomination form and for full nomination criteria. The deadline for submissions is Friday, February 13.

For more information, please contact Kelly Gorven at k.gorven@ocna.org or 416-923-7724 ext. 4439.

Wellington Advertiser Wins Silver Award At The COPA Awards

Submitted By The Wellington Advertiser

The Wellington Advertiser in Fergus was recognized with a silver award in the Best Print and Digital Publication category at the Canadian Online Publishing Awards (COPA) earlier this month.

The Advertiser's Grand and Gorgeous publication is a destination guide featuring the top ten things to do in Elora and Fergus. It's available digitally at grandandgorgeous.com or in print at tourism and retail outlets. It also provides recommendations for accommodations, restaurants and shopping.

It earned second place, next to Vancouver Magazine, which won the top spot.

Helen Michel, production manager, and Drew Mochrie, sales representative, were in attendance to accept the award on the Advertiser's behalf.

The COPA awards program is open to any company or organization that produces content for the digital medium. The COPAs is not affiliated with any trade organizations and is an industry-neutral awards program for the Canadian industry that comprises volunteer judges from across Canada.

The biggest winner of the night was Hakai Magazine of Vancouver, BC with six gold and three silver awards. HuffPost Canada won three gold and three silver, and Bell Media won two gold and three silver.



COPA producer Martin Seto (left) with Wellington Advertiser sales representative, Drew Mochrie.

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

April 3, 2020

Spring Convention, BNC Awards Gala + Ontario Junior Citizen Awards

Join the OCNA at the Hilton Garden Inn in Vaughan on Friday, April 3, 2020 for a jam-packed day of industry-focused sessions and networking opportunities. This year the 2019 Ontario Junior Citizen Awards will be presented during lunch, when 12 outstanding youth will be recognized for making a difference. The evening will conclude with the Association's coveted event, the BNC Awards Gala, when 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners of the competition will be announced.

For more information regarding the convention or gala, please contact Karen Shardlow at k.shardlow@ocna.org or 416-923-7724 ext. 4432.

For more information regarding the Ontario Junior Citizen Awards, please contact Kelly Gorven at k.gorven@ocna.org or 416-923-7724 ext. 4439.

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Eganville Leader Publisher And Two Others Escape Injury In Christmas Crash

Gerald Tracey, Publisher of the Eganville Leader was involved in a car accident on Christmas Day. He attempted to veer around a van that had stopped in his lane after hitting a deer, but was faced with headlights of an oncoming car. He immediately hit the brakes, but the road was icy and he recognized there was no chance of stopping as quickly as necessary.

To avoid a head-on-collision, he swung back into his lane, hoping there was enough room to squeeze through the two vehicles. There was not, and as a result, the driver's side of Gerald's pick-up truck struck the rear driver's side of the van. His truck flipped and ended up sliding into the car.

Luckily, Gerald and the other drivers - a local firefighter and a young woman - escaped injury.

Gerald said it was his "first crash of any significance in 49 years and the first one to occur while on the job."



Gladding Family Celebrates 50 Years Of Owning The Tavistock Gazette

On July 1, 1969, Bob and Doris Gladding purchased the Tavistock Gazette from Hart and Edna Brown. In 1988 their son Bill and his wife Sheri took over the business, and they have since become the longest-serving couple for the paper in its 123-year history.

In the summer last year, the Gladding's celebrated 50 years of owning the valued community newspaper.

In a letter written to subscribers, Bill and Sheri say:

"As we approach 2020, it would be nice to see more new names play a bigger part in Tavistock village life. It's time for a new person to take over the Tavistock Gazette. From where we stand, there's plenty of room for growth in the community and the business environment, which can only be good for a newspaper. And there is no reason the news delivery model has to remain the same. With lots of options in digital platforms, the internet, free content and other community-based papers, a new person could take the Tavistock Gazette to new heights.

What we would like to pass along is that it is always about community first and the positive impact our residents offer. Whether it's a young person who is just starting out on life's journey or a retiree who is looking back on a life of service, people are what makes the news, and their stories are worth telling. The Gladdings would like to retire someday too. If you are looking for a fulfilling career in a great community, this is the place for you. Contact the Gazette today and let's talk about the future. We know Tavistock is depending on it."

2019 Ontario Junior Citizen Final Recipients Announced

In today's fast-paced society, filled with technology and distractions, there are young leaders across the Province who are taking advantage of the resources available and using them to make a difference within their communities. Rather than staying at home to watch Netflix or YouTube, they are volunteering their time to charities and organizations. They are utilizing their experience with social media, and their knowledge of the Internet, to connect with others on issues they feel strongly about. They are jumping into activism. They are taking control. And they are proving that age is just a number, and that one is never too young to make an impact.

The 12 young men and women listed below ranging in age from 10 to 17, have worked hard in various ways to create awareness or raise funds for causes close to their hearts. They have demonstrated creativity and generosity to inspire others. Which is why the Ontario Community Newspapers Association (OCNA) is proud to recognize them as 2019 Ontario Junior Citizens. The 12 finalists will be invited to receive their award during a special ceremony on Friday, April 3, 2020. The OCNA, along with its 240 members, is looking forward to celebrating their achievements.

The 2019 Ontario Junior Citizens listed in alphabetical order:

Mikayla Ansley, 12, Blyth

As a survivor of bilateral retinoblastoma, Mikayla had to undergo chemotherapy (on top of 55 operations) in the first few years of her life. As a result, her left eye was removed and she lost most of the vision in her right, becoming legally blind at the age of two. And while it has been an adjustment living with limited sight, Mikayla has remained positive and focused on advocating for kindness.

Last year, her essay titled 'Kindness Matters' was awarded the Grand Prize and worldwide recognition for the Lion's Club International's Peace Essay competition. The achievement earned her the opportunity to speak to 1,500 Lion dignitaries from all over the world at the United Nations in Manhattan. In her essay she notes that she is so thankful to everyone that supported her family during dark times, which is why she is on a mission to make the world a little brighter for everyone. Whether it's a smile at a stranger, or a contribution to a fundraiser, she believes kindness matters more than we know.

To celebrate her accomplishments, her home municipality of North Huron proclaimed April 14, 2019 as Mikayla Ansley Day. The festivity included a special event, through which hundreds of dollars and dozens of pounds of food were collected for a local food bank.

Cameron Cadarette, 15, Windsor

At the age of 12, Cameron created a non-profit organization called 'Project Teal'. Its purpose is to bring awareness to First Responders and veterans that live with PTSD. The organization connects others with resources in their communities, including therapy, physicians, government services or outreach groups. But most importantly, it provides an open line for communication.

Cameron himself lives with PTSD as a result of childhood abuse and relies on the support of his Service Dog, Vince. He is using his own experience

with the disorder to show others that having PTSD doesn't make someone any less of a person.

A side project of his is called the 'Life Pack Program'. Four times a year, Cameron collects toiletries, clothing, sleeping bags, and non-perishable food items for the homeless population in his city. He packs the items into backpacks, along with a breakfast, and delivers them himself to anyone in need. To date he has assembled and delivered more than 5,000 bags.

Lincoln Dugas-Nishisato, 10, Toronto

Since Lincoln was five years old, he has learned the power one person has to change another's day, and it has become a passion of his to make the world a better place.

Last February he helped sort and pack thousands of pounds of hockey gear to be sent to children in First Nations communities. In addition, he has helped deliver backpacks filled with supplies for kids in need at local shelters and outreach programs, and sorted sanitary products for low income women through the Period Purse initiative. His impressive list of volunteer contributions also includes manning the Salvation Army Christmas kettle, preparing bags of nutritious meals through Kids Against Hunger, and sorting donations received by the Salvation Army's Toy



Mountain project. Most notable, however, is his effort to raise the largest amount by any individual (more than \$2,000 per year for three years) for Haven On The Queensway's Coldest Night of the Year event.

Daphné Dupuis, 17, Sault Ste. Marie

Last spring, in an effort to increase organ donation awareness among teens, Daphné spearheaded the 'Don8Life' campaign. It targets those who are turning 16 and therefore will soon be eligible to register as donors. She approached three local driver's education schools, asking if they would consider implementing organ donation awareness in their curriculum. Successful in her pitch, she has been speaking bi-weekly during driver's ed classes about the importance of registering.

Upon discovering that 4500 people in Canada are on the organ-donation waitlist, with only 27% of Canadians registered to be donors, Daphné became determined to improve these statistics. Her goal is to encourage 100 youth donors, which could result in 800 lives potentially being saved.

Islay Graham, 14, Georgian Bluffs

In 2017, the town of South Bruce Peninsula used a bulldozer and other heavy equipment to remove vegetation from Sauble Beach in order to make it more appealing for visitors. As a result, the Great Lakes Piping Plover, an endangered species of shorebird, was affected. As of 2019, only 75 nesting pairs of Piping Plovers could be found throughout the entire Great Lakes regions, with only six pairs left in Ontario.

The city claimed that Piping Plovers preferred a 'clean beach' and argued they did nothing wrong. Disagreeing with their statement, Islay took it upon herself to investigate whether this was true. She launched several research studies, which included analyzing current nests, examining historical nests, and tracking the habits of the Piping Plovers and their chicks over the course of four weeks. This included observing them at 15 minutes intervals every hour throughout a day for four weeks. From her careful observations, she was able to conclude that the species DO NOT prefer a clean beach. In fact, over half of the bird's day was spent along the high-water mark where driftwood and reeds settle.

Islay turned her investigation into a Science Fair project, which won her a Platinum Award as the Best Junior Science Project in Canada.

Helena Kirk, 14, Toronto

When Helena was just three years old, she endured 841 days of chemotherapy and 650 procedures to beat Leukemia. It was during her journey that she learned about inequitable access to childhood cancer treatment in Canada, and how a tragic number of kids are dying as a result.

In 2018 she founded Helena's Hope, an advocacy group with a mission to create a National Childhood Cancer Strategy. She managed to rally over 150 families dealing with childhood cancer across the country, and received signatures from over 30 cancer organizations and 30 pediatric oncologists for a budget proposal. As a result, the Liberal government recently committed \$30 million in funding for childhood cancer research.

Spencer Lipppa, 10, Halton Hills

Spencer has been actively promoting civic action and democratic

participation since October 2017 when he became the youngest member of a federal political party. He was permitted into the party by a special motion from the party leader in acknowledgment of his tremendous commitment.

Spencer is worried about climate change and believes political institutions and organizations have the greatest potential to create change. As a result, he has spoken on behalf of a motion declaring a climate emergency at the municipal level. He was an active participant in Guelph at the New Green Deal Town Hall and has delivered nearly a dozen speeches to crowds of people, calling for action. He participated in many climate strikes, and finally, he has worked on behalf of the Concerned Residents' Coalition to stop the Hidden Quarry since May of 2019.

Ethan Parikh, 16, Mississauga

Over the Spring and Summer of 2018, Ethan collected seven suitcases full of donated items, including soccer equipment, school supplies and toiletries, and travelled to Nairobi's Soweto slums to personally deliver them to school-aged children. He immersed himself in the lifestyle there, and it didn't take long before he realized that most of the kids did not wear shoes. He learned that this made them prime targets for jiggers, a debilitating skin infection caused by parasitic sand fleas.

The horrible reality inspired Ethan to take action and an innovative treatment campaign was established. The anti-jiggers campaign has three goals: to treat children with jiggers, to educate children and their families with prevention strategies, and to supply closed-toed shoes to those in need. These can all be accomplished for just \$7 per child.

In March 2019, he delivered a TedX speech for the first student-led TedX Conference in Halton. He won \$600 from his persuasive presentation, which was donated to his cause. With help from other organizations, he has raised over \$2,000 towards his anti-jiggers campaign and helped more than 280 children.

Lazar Paroski, 15, Kitchener

At the age of 13, Lazar applied for a City of Kitchener Love My Hood placemaking grant to build a Math Wall and accessible table at a local park. He hopes these additions will improve standardized math testing scores, recognizing that the regional result was well below the provincial standard. He was successful in his efforts and awarded the grant, with a 6-month timeline to complete the project. Getting to work right away, he led group consultations and compiled feedback from 462 children to determine what should appear on the Math Wall. After which, he worked with a graphic designer to create the visual elements.

Grand opening for the Math Wall sparked much interest from various groups and organizations in the community. He addressed an audience of over 100 adult professionals in the field of youth development as Keynote speaker of the Parks and Recreation, MBA 2019 Symposium. He also recently emceed the 2019 City of Kitchener Neighbourhood summit, engaging an audience of residents, council members and staff.

Christopher Pennington, 15, Kincardine

Christopher has been involved with the Kidney Foundation of Canada since 2015, shortly after he was diagnosed with the autoimmune disorder

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MEMBER SERVICE SPOTLIGHT

WEBINARS

Throughout the year, OCNA provides educational opportunities for our members such as hands-on training with industry-relevant computer software, and the various management skills needed in the workplace.

The OCNA has teamed up with the Online Media Campus to help the association fulfill its mission of providing affordable and relevant training to members, through a variety of webinars.

The OCNA offers a wide variety of services to its members, including events, awards, and training courses.

Visit www.ocna.org/webinar-series to see a list of upcoming webinars.

Chatham Voice Is Approved To Hire An LJI Reporter

The Chatham Voice received approval from News Media Canada to hire an investigative journalist through the Local Journalism Initiative. The successful candidate will be responsible for covering civic affairs, climate change and education in Chatham-Kent.

The community newspaper is looking forward to shining a light into the many dark corners to provide readers with increased municipal government coverage, and to share with peer organizations around the province and country.

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Outstanding Youth Recognized As Ontario Junior Citizens

>>> Continued from page 5

Henoch-Schonlein Purpura (HSP), which can cause chronic kidney disease. Rather than letting the illness get him down, Christopher has become a spokesperson. Keen to find a cure, he has been dedicated to raising awareness in his community and rally others to help support research Kidney disease, which now affects 1 in 10 Canadians.

He was the honorary chair of the first Owen Sound Kidney Walk that year and the following year, and later helped found the Goderich Kidney Walk. In 2018 he began an online auction, which has attracted 180 business over the course of two years. This year he was able to secure a Toronto Maple Leafs jersey signed by Mitch Marner.

Since first becoming involved with the foundation, Christopher and his crew have raised over \$60,000 to support research. In 2016, Christopher's Crew (a group of community members that he has recruited) was ranked fifth in the province for total donations raised.

Galiya Vendrov, 16, Whitchurch-Stouffville

When Galiya was just 14 years old, she founded the youth organization called Youth of Canada (www.youthofcanada.ca). Its three main missions are to inspire, empower and enrich Canadian youth. The website includes a multitude of resources and opportunities, including extracurricular experiences from exchanges, to scholarships, volunteer opportunities, and international tournaments and competitions.

Two sections on the site are highlighted. The Youth Blog's Mental Health Awareness Week invited young people to share their experiences and perspectives of mental wellbeing, to show others that they are supported and understood. And the Student Spotlight showcases accomplishments of amazing youth. Published stories include a profile on a teenage tech CEO, a professional wakeboarder, a published author, and others between the ages of 14 and 24 that have the capability to spark inspiration in others.

Lucy Zhao, 17, Richmond Hill

Reflecting on her time spent one summer serving low-income families at her local food bank, Lucy launched the first-ever Community Service Project with her school's DECA chapter to target food insecurity. She founded LiveFresh, a health and wellness event and partnered with the York Region Food Network to engage over 100 club members in sustainable community gardening and affordable healthy eating.

Last April she co-founded BLOOM, a social justice initiative dedicated to empowering women and children struggling with domestic abuse. She's currently leading a team of 15 individuals in the GTA and organizing an arts showcase event, which will take place this March, with hopes of raising \$2,000 for Yellow Brick House, a local women's shelter. She has spent many, many hours volunteering her time with the shelter, but became frustrated and disheartened by the quality of donations that were received. She's hoping her efforts with BLOOM will change the idea that "to donate" should not just be about giving items that are no longer wanted, but rather a conscious decision to lend some support.

The Ontario Junior Citizen Awards are promoted through the OCNA. Nominations of eligible youth aged six to 17, are received through 240 community newspaper members committed to recognizing the young leaders who are making a difference in their communities. Nominees may be involved in community service, are contributing to their community while living with a physical or psychological limitation, individuals who have performed acts of heroism or bravery, or those who achieve excellence in personal achievement. Candidates are also recognized for being 'good kids' who go above and beyond what is expected of their age and show a commitment to making life better for others. A panel of judges unanimously agreed on the final award recipients.



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As A Manager You Must Know How To Provide Feedback

By Ron Guest, Senior Partner, TwoGreySuits

Knowing how to provide feedback to employees is a MUST-HAVE skill in being a good people manager!

When well done, it builds solid relationships based on candor and integrity. On the other hand, poorly expressed feedback will demotivate others and make for bad business and strained relationships.

Feedback is a stated observation/perception of another's conduct or performance. It should be given with the same introspection and care in which it is to be received.

The message must be delivered in a thoughtful and well-balanced manner (you control this) and received in a similar mature way (you don't control this). Consider that the 'real' message received is based on 3 factors: 7% on what is said; secondly, 43% on how it is delivered; and thirdly, 50% on body language as interpreted by the recipient.

These guidelines will help you give proper feedback:

- **Get the facts** – First, do your homework. Ask questions to get the facts, get the right facts and get the facts right. Be open to new information, for, if you have partial information you will predictably give inaccurate feedback. You will then look bad.
- **Know who you are dealing with** – Assess how the other person will react and tailor your message and method of delivery to that person. Generally, give positives in public and negatives in private; however, break this guideline if the person gets embarrassed easily and prefers these types of conversations to be done privately.
- **Give them the feedback FIRST** – The recipient of feedback deserves respect and courtesy—especially if the feedback is about something that went wrong. If you talk about someone behind their back and then, if they hear gossip from another person, you become the executive 'weasel' whose leadership role has now been compromised.
- **Do it face-to-face** – Particularly if feedback deals with criticism, mature adults deal with tough situations face-to-face, not by impersonal emails or by phone. Give it in person – this also lets you see the person's reaction, thereby ensuring that the appropriate message has been received.
- **Do it fast** – People affected by important information need to hear it quickly – whether it is good or bad news. Few things are worse than waiting in suspense and feeling you are being controlled by someone. Once all facts are on the table, people are more relaxed and it is easier to deal with virtually any situation.
- **Deliver the message in balance** – Try to sandwich the positive and negative messages. This is all about balance, not manipulation, e.g., you could discuss a person's positive intentions, critique



a specific situation that did not work out, and then express confidence that you believe in them and that you see they are motivated to get better results next time.

- **Do it with tact** – Be direct and be sensitive. Give feedback on a person's actions/issues, not on their personality. Never assault their personality. If you need inspiration for this, think of your own worst experience, that is, when you were on the receiving end of a poorly delivered feedback that didn't sit well with you.
- **Keep cool** – Discuss things professionally. If you find yourself being hooked into a mental or emotional battle, ask questions for clarification. Or, if someone is 'losing it', take a breather. Buy some time – things said in anger rarely turn out positively.

There are certain truths that endure: People want to be important, want to matter and be valuable. They crave self-esteem. By what people say and do, one message they regularly deliver is: "... notice me ... I count! ...".

Effective feedback is a gift that will make most people in most companies more successful. While your gift to them costs you just a little time, recipients say that receiving it is priceless!

Ron Guest has twenty-five years of business and HR experience as a practitioner, executive, executive coach and a consultant to small/medium sized businesses in recruitment, management development, employee engagement and performance management. He is a pioneer in behavioural interviewing and has interviewed over 8,000 candidates in his career. Ron has a Bachelor of Commerce degree from Saint Mary's University. He can be reached at rguest@twogreysuits.com

ONLINE MEDIA CAMPUS WEBINARS:

OCNA has teamed with the Online Media Campus to help the Association fulfill its mission of providing affordable and relevant training to members.

■ Friday, February 21 - Time Management Tips Of Media Sales Superstars

Where did the day go? This is a question we all ask. Ad sales expert Ryan Dohrn will share his top 10 time management tools that will help you boost your personal productivity by 35% in just one week! This is one of Ryan's most popular workshops! From creating call zones to time-saving email templates, to making better use of your CRM tools – learn expert and well-tested tips to reclaim eight hours every week and win more business faster.

Meet the Presenter:

Ryan Dohrn is the host of the #1 iTunes advertising sales podcast, Ad Sales Nation, and has trained over 6,000 media sales people in seven countries. His 25-year media career spans newspapers, consumer, B2B, traditional, and digital media brands from Disney to PennWell. He is also the founder of Brain Swell Media, an international sales motivational keynote speaker, an Emmy Award winner, best-selling book author, and he still sells media today.

Cost:

\$35 (USD)

Registrations submitted after deadline are subject to \$10 late fee. Registrations accepted until the day of the webinar. Log in instructions will be sent 48 hours ahead of scheduled program. If you are interested in participating but are unable to attend the live webinar, we encourage you to sign up anyway. As part of your webinar package, you will receive free access of the archive of this webinar by registering for the live session.

For more information and to register, visit www.onlinemediacampus.com.

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- > Events - Fairs, Markets, Shows, Theatre, Concerts or Sports. Spread the word to draw more people
- > Help wanted - Trades and other positions that individuals would relocate or commute to

Contact OCNA Network Classified Coordinator Lucia Shepherd for full details at l.shepherd@ocna.org or 416-923-7724 ext 4423.

Meet Them Where They Are

By John Foust
Raleigh, NC

Tim manages an ad sales team. “When I started my career in the newspaper business, I quickly learned that advertisers can be worlds apart in their knowledge of marketing,” he said. “That’s why one of my favourite sales principles is the old slogan, ‘Meet them where they are.’

“This means we have to recognize that our prospects have different levels of experience. Most of them don’t have our knowledge of the intricacies of newspapers. If we don’t talk to them on their level, they will tune us out. And most of them are too polite to tell us we’re doing a poor job of explaining things.”

Tim’s comments remind me of the time my wife and I helped her father select a car. He loved his 14-year-old car, but it was time for a replacement, because expensive things were beginning to go wrong with it. At the dealership, we found a nice used car with only 12 thousand miles – a much newer version of his old model. Our salesperson was sincere and down-to-earth, but unfortunately, he was hung up on technology. He spent most of the test drive talking about the screen in the middle of the dashboard. He was a walking encyclopedia of Bluetooth and WIFI and digital programming, but my father-in-law had no interest in those things. He just wanted to see how the car drove and learn the relevant differences between his old car and the new one. His patience with the barrage of comments like “look at this other cool feature” was a clear sign that he liked the car.

In spite of the salesperson’s single-minded focus, my wife’s dad decided it was the right car for him. When the transaction was over, he mentioned that the salesperson was nice, but extremely confusing. The next day, he accepted my offer of a simple tutorial. I sat in the car with him, placed my hand over the dashboard

display and said, “The first thing we’re going to do is forget about all of this.” He said, “That’s a good start.” Then we reviewed and practiced some basics until he was comfortable. When we finished, he said he was more confident and even more excited about the car.

Age and experience make a big difference. That car salesperson should have known that a person of my father-in-law’s age wouldn’t care about fancy technology. But he was so blinded by his own interest that he couldn’t see things from another person’s perspective.

“It’s all a matter of common sense,” Tim said. “If a prospect is a numbers person, we should talk in terms of numbers – even if we’re not numbers people ourselves. If someone is an idea person, we should focus on ad concepts. Of course, this means we have to be prepared to talk to about advertising from all angles.”

Meet your prospects where they are. Let that be your guideline and you’ll be on the right road.

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

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How Do We Reach Millennials?

FOCUS GROUPS LEAD TO A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF YOUNG ADULTS

By Kevin Slimp

Steve Andrist, executive director of North Dakota Newspaper Association, asked me an interesting question recently. It was related to my visit to Bismarck in October to work with a focus group of millennials from throughout the state who met together to spend a good part of a day looking at, and discussing, newspapers.

Prior to my trip to Bismarck, I did what I often do: I surveyed newspaper readers and non-readers throughout the US and Canada to determine what differences there were, if any, between the general population and millennials related to interest in newspapers. After meeting with the focus group in Bismarck, I met with North Dakota publishers to discuss what we had learned during the day. A week or so later, I wrote a report for NDNA with the findings of the focus group.

Steve's question was simple, "Do you have any quick advice on what you'd suggest newspapers do with this information?"

We learned a lot about millennials prior to, and during, the day in Bismarck. We learned they're not quick to spend money on any type of news. If they do spend money, they'd prefer to spend it on their local newspaper than anywhere else. We also learned that most of the millennials who live away from home check their hometown newspaper website for local news now and then.

In answer to Steve's question, here are the main takeaways I would suggest community newspapers keep in mind:

Millennials, like most other in the general population, aren't looking for national or international news in their community papers. Even when looking at papers from larger cities in the state, the group reported having no interest in reading news from outside the community.

Millennials prefer print, as do most other newspaper readers. While they will check out their hometown paper online while away in college or after college, they indicate they would be more likely to spend money on a printed newspaper in the place they live than a digital version.

Millennials have less interest in sports in their community papers than the general population. When ranking areas of interest, local sports came far down the list.

Millennials are most interested in local news, especially news related to - and stories about - individuals. They are more likely to buy a newspaper if it includes stories about individuals in the millennial age group now and then. They are also interested in local government news.

Millennials have a lot of interest in reading about local entertainment, even in a small town. This might mean the entertainment is taking place in a larger town up the road, but entertainment and music are of great interest to readers in

this age group.

Millennials, much like the general population, indicate they would read a free paper if it arrived in their mailbox once a week. More than 50 percent (in the national survey and in the focus group) indicated they would read the paper every week, with another 35 percent indicating they likely read the free paper most weeks.

In answer to Steve's question, what would I take away from this information if I were a local newspaper publisher?

First, I'd remember that millennials of this generation aren't so different from most of us when we were in our 20s. They're busy and don't read newspapers as often as older groups, but most of them will likely be newspaper readers as they marry and have families.

To promote readership among millennials, keep in mind their interest in stories about individuals. Interview high school, college-age and young adults for stories on a regular basis.

Include more news about local entertainment and music.

Finally, I'd keep the statistic related to free weekly papers in mind. I wouldn't change my current structure, but I'd begin the thinking about how to use the knowledge that most people report they would read a free newspaper if it ended up in their mailbox. Whether that meant creating an alternate news pub or finding other ways to take advantage of this statistic, it's important information.

The good folks at Delta are hollering at me. Apparently, they need me on the plane. Steve, I hope this answers your question.



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