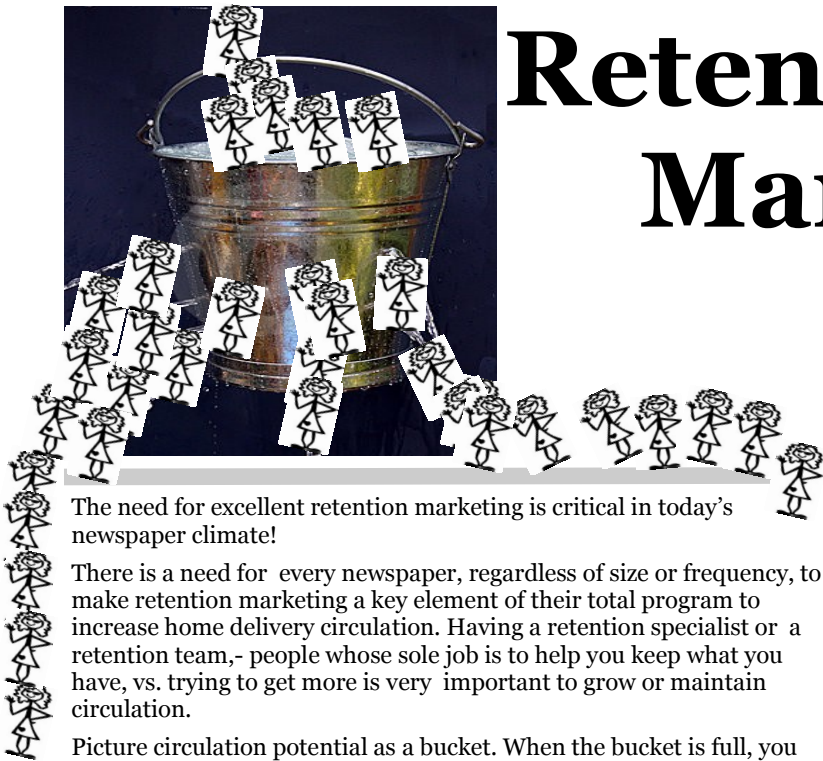


Retention Marketing Is Critical...



The need for excellent retention marketing is critical in today's newspaper climate!

There is a need for every newspaper, regardless of size or frequency, to make retention marketing a key element of their total program to increase home delivery circulation. Having a retention specialist or a retention team, - people whose sole job is to help you keep what you have, vs. trying to get more is very important to grow or maintain circulation.

Picture circulation potential as a bucket. When the bucket is full, you have achieved 100% penetration of your market. We all know that will never happen, but it should be the goal at every newspaper. For most newspapers, that bucket is just about half full. Some a bit more than that, for others a little less.

If we must keep pouring more and more orders into the top of the bucket, but the level of the contents of the bucket does not get higher, or at least not appreciably higher, what is the problem? It's simple, there's a big hole in the bottom of the bucket and business is pouring out through it almost as fast as you pour business into the top. Sort of like trying to fill your bathtub without putting the stopper in place!

I call it simple math... If you have 10 people stop their paper today, how many will you need to have an increase of one? Eleven, right? Are you with me so far? If you can reduce your stops by just three, down to seven and still sell eleven, I see an increase of four.

So, one major component to real growth would logically be, to try to plug that hole in the bottom of the bucket, or at least try to make it smaller. So how do we accomplish that?

Here are several ways newspapers can improve their retention marketing.

- Verify all starts and restarts. Check within the first 24 hours of the start date. Your retention person should call the subscriber to make sure delivery has started and that service is okay. The goal should be to reach 90% or more by phone. Call three or four times, if necessary, over two or three days, to get this accomplished. Failure to start, if undetected, will quickly move those new customers toward that hole in the bottom of the bucket!
- Build a relationship with the new subscriber by sending them a letter, signed by someone important such as the Publisher, Editor or Circulation Director. Welcome the new customers as a subscriber and make a commitment to serving them. Include a promise of a money back guarantee. This tells the new customer that you are serious about providing great service.
- Service checks. Have your retention person call subscribers who have complained more than once, or who called in a serious complaint, to make sure that the problem has been taken care of satisfactorily. If the problem is not corrected make sure the person calling has the ability to resolve the problem quickly and efficiently when necessary.
- Call all permanent stops. Have someone who is specially trained in



By Steve Learn
LMCIS Owner
Newspaper Consultant
256.710.3390
stevelearn65@yahoo.com

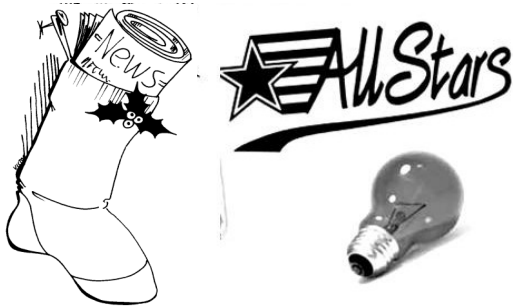
stop reselling to immediately call permanent stops to ascertain the true reason(s) for the stop and to try to resell them. Many "stops" are really "poor service stops" that have been disguised as something else when the subscriber called in (like "no time to read"). Never let a subscriber go through that hole in the bucket without first trying to rescue them!

- Call all indefinite temporary stops. These are the folks who say "stop my paper for vacation, and I'll call when I get back." Many never do call back! The retention person should start calling these people four weeks after the stops, if they have not called back to restart.
- A few weeks after the stop, send a "we miss you" letter, and follow it up with another phone call from the retention person. If that call fails, send a direct mail to those who are still stopped, perhaps at quarterly intervals over the next year. Just remember, NEVER, EVER give up!
- Call carrier-collect non-pay stops. If you still have carrier-collect customers, do not allow a customer to be stopped by the carrier for non-payment until your retention person has called the subscriber to try to flush out the money. This will work about 50% of the time. Often it is because the carrier made no effort beyond just a note or bill envelope. Send a runner out to pick up the customer's payment, having arranged this during aphone call. Then, credit the payment to the carrier, less a predetermined percentage which would be a collection fee. This idea alone will put a major patch on that hole in the bucket of many newspapers!
- Make your renewal bill marketing-oriented. Make sure the process sells the renewal, not just tries to collect money. Send a marketing-oriented renewal piece in an envelope, with a return envelope enclosed, instead of just mailing them a post card. Enclose sales/upgrade promotion pieces in the mailing, etc. Send the material far enough ahead

of expiration so that the subscriber has time to reply before expiration date. And, have a 15 to 30 day grace period after expiration during which you keep trying to secure the renewal.

- Do grace period telephone calling. Stop sending bills once the subscription has expired. Have the retention person call. The first call should be two or three days after expiration, just as a friendly reminder. Try for a credit card number. Then, if necessary, call again two or three days before the end of grace, to sell the renewal and try to flush out the payment. Even offer to have the payment picked up, if that's what it takes to secure the renewal!
- Use "auto pay!" Automatic monthly direct debiting or credit card charging. Sell it enthusiastically to your subscribers. Auto pay customers are like the Energizer Bunny-they just keep going, and going, and going!

Now that you've plugged up that hole in the bucket, you can watch your circulation and penetration really start to grow!



Miss one issue... Miss out on the one idea that could make your 2011 successful.

LEARNiNg More Circulation Idea Service

Visit us on the web www.circulationidea.com

<p>Steve Learn LMCIS Owner Newspaper Consultant 256.710.3390 stevelearn65@yahoo.com</p> 	<p>Christie Learn Publisher/Editor LMCIS 256.757.6849 clearn2007@yahoo.com</p> 	<p>Fred Foutz VP Circulation GateHouse Media 309.686.3149 ffoutz@pjstar.com</p> 
<p>Aileen Hood LMCIS Columnist 719.859.1112 paperlad-yaileen@yahoo.com</p> 	<p>Doug Davis LMCIS Columnist barefootpirate@cflar.com</p> 	<p>Frank Mastromarino Circulation Consultant 910.728.6055 mastro@ncrr.com</p> 
<p>Robert Bobber Circulation Consultant 407.9259134 rjbobber@bellsouth.net</p> 	<p>Jerry Bellune Publisher, Author Newspaper Consultant 803.359.7633 jerry@jerrybellune.com</p> 	<p>Ron Anderson Former CIS Owner (585)381.0686. randers2@rochester.rr.com</p> 
<p>Rebekah Rose Circulation Sales And Marketing Director The Daily News Iron Moun- tain, Michigan 906.221.3999 kiki0412@charter.net</p> 	<p>Tony LeBlanc Director of Circulation Winnipeg Sun 204.632.2654 Tony.LeBlanc@sunmedia.ca</p> 	<p>Debbie Keenan The Keenan Group LMCIS Creative Consultant 1.800.229.0922 debbiekeenan@earthlink.net</p> 
<p>Peter Gutierrez Circulation Director The Record Dow Jones Local Media Group 209.546.8303 pgutierrez@recordnet.com</p> 	<p>Max Heath NNA Postal Chair Postal Consultant 502.513.1156 maxheath@lnci.com</p> 	<p>Philip K Hanna Newspaper Consultant 770.252.5900 paperboy@sumnergrove.net</p> 
<p>Keith Foutz Corporate Circulation & Operations Director Western Communica- tions, Inc. 541.385.5805 kfoutz@hendulletin.com</p> 	<p>Mike Zinser Attorney The Zinser Law firm, P.C. 615.244.9700 mzinsler@zinslaw.com</p> 	<p>Jim Martin Circulation Director Casa Grande Valley Newspapers Inc. 520.423.8642 jmartin@trivalleycentral.com</p> 

Don't take a chance, subscribe today! Put this team of "All Stars" to work for your newspaper! Call 256.757.6849