

CONNECTED

VISUAL MEDIA ALLIANCE

SPRING 2021



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Visual Media Alliance is the non-profit trade association serving Northern California's graphic arts industry. By providing events, education, discounts, advocacy, industry promotion, and insurance programs, we help our 550 member firms become more successful and profitable.

ON THE COVER

A Whole Latte Results is a special self-promotional marketing campaign for Daily Digital Imaging consisting of coffee cup sleeves and lid stickers.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings Valued Members,

I am proud and humbled to be stepping into the role of President at Visual Media Alliance. I have big shoes to fill. My predecessor, Dan Nelson, has dedicated the last 40 years to building this organization into a nationally respected trade association. I am grateful to be joining an enormously talented staff and board team that will continue to provide programs that save our member companies time and money, as well as events that connect us and celebrate the creativity of our member firms.

I am not new to Visual Media Alliance, nor the graphic arts industry. Prior to accepting the President's post, I spent 10 years on our Board three years as Board Chair. I also served as our national board representative to Printing Industries of America (PIA), now PRINTING United Alliance (PrUA), as well as representing VMA on our statewide healthcare trust, Printing Industries Benefits Trust (PIBT).

Having spent over 30 years in the printing industry as the owner of two companies, I will bring my problem-solving expertise and ability to relate to—and hopefully, assist with—many of the challenges you are facing in your own businesses.

In this issue of Connected, we are diving into the networking and sales process. Sales are the necessary lifeblood of any organization, and I can't stress strongly enough the importance of setting goals and creating an action plan for the coming year, including ideas for increasing your sales pipeline. In order to help your prospecting and networking, I encourage you to take advantage of VMA's online events like Collective Conversations roundtables and the new SalesCircle networking group.

I am eager to learn more about your printing and creative organizations and to hear your ideas for the future of VMA, your trade association. I'm looking forward to in-person visits to your shops and creative studios when the climate allows. Please reach out to me anytime at ian@vma.bz.

We have strength in numbers, and together, we are better.



Sincerely,

Ian Flynn

Ian Flynn
President VMA

Weeks and weeks of isolation
But still infinite and invincible determination

We are distant
But we stand together

And together
We shall overcome.



Save on Home & Auto Insurance with MetLife



MetLife We're excited to announce that VMA has partnered to bring members special savings on quality auto and home insurance from MetLife Auto & Home. You can save hundreds of dollars with good driver rewards and multi-vehicle savings. Members can now get coverage that's custom fit to your needs and budget, plus MetLife provides 24/7/365 claim reporting.

For more info on how to get a quote contact Shannon Wolford at shannon@vma.bz or visit vma.bz/discounts/metlife/.

Increase Your Value Props with PrintReleaf Sustainability Certification



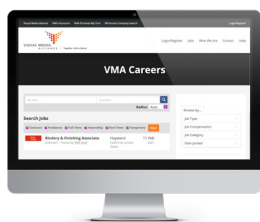
Sustainability is no longer a trend; it's a growing "must have" for your brands. Fifty-seven percent of consumers say they are willing to change their purchasing behavior "to help

reduce negative environmental impact," according to a 2020 study by the National Retail Federation and IBM.

VMA has partnered with PrintReleaf to make it easier to help you help your clients achieve their sustainability goals. PrintReleaf's platform automatically converts your paper footprint into actual trees. As you print, they actively replant trees in forests that need it most around the world.

Do good and get it at a great price. Members receive 25% off published rates, about \$250 in savings per year. Contact shannon@vma.bz to get set up and visit printreleaf.com.

New Job Center Just for Our Industry & Geography



The new VMA Job Center website is available for employers to post job listings, search for potential employees, and for job seekers to post their resumes and search for jobs.

Visit jobs.vma.bz and create an account today to gain access. Reach out to your career matchmaker Sue Benavente at sue@vma.bz or 415-489-7622.

More Valuable & Free HR Perks

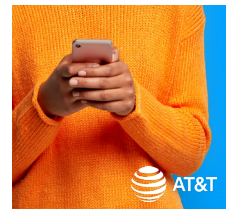


VMA members get lots of complimentary perks. One of those is access to ThinkHR, an integrated suite of human resource knowledge, compliance tools, and training solutions supported by live HR experts. ThinkHR's expertise helps businesses with workplace regulations and litigation avoidance by providing guidance, answering pressing questions, and following up with research to resolve issues.

And now, ThinkHR offers free Sexual Harassment Prevention Training. Employers with 5 or more employees must provide sexual harassment and abusive conduct prevention training to employees every two years and upon hiring. It's great to have the training convenient and free! Visit vma.bz/hr-support/thinkhr or contact Jessica Clark at jessica@vma.bz or 800-659-3363 to gain access.

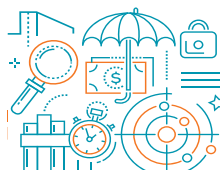
AT&T & VMA: All About More Connection

Here's a new member benefit that everyone will love! VMA has partnered with AT&T to provide discounts on unlimited phone and data for as low as \$30 a month per line when you transfer your existing service or create a new account with VMA. Equipment deals and more special offers just for you!



If you are interested, reach out to Shannon Wolford at shannon@vma.bz or 415-710-0568. For more details visit vma.bz/discounts/att.

Business Risks on the Rise, VMA's Biz Insurance Dept. Helps Protect



With all the surprises COVID-19 continues to throw our way, VMA has been busy supporting members with their commercial insurance needs. From workers' compensation rate changes to business interruption insurance, we're working hard to provide members with the latest for our industry. Reach out at any time if you want to learn about all the different risks and ways to keep your business safe.





















Now's a good time to reach David Katz at david@vma.bz or your VMA representative if you have any questions or want to get ahead of issues. We'll be happy to talk and make sure you're covered so you can put your mind at ease.

\$20K in Scholarship Awarded

Congratulations to 20 VMA's Scholarship award recipients for the fall 2020 and spring 2021 semesters! This year, we were able to double the award to \$20,000, helping our youth continue to achieve their dreams in these challenging times. The Guy and Louise Condrott Scholarship Fund, Inc. and the VMA Education Scholarship Fund are dedicated to providing financial support to students pursuing an education in the graphic arts, to keep the industry thriving.

For more information about the scholarship and how to apply to our scholarship offered every semester, visit vma.bz/scholarship or contact Sue Benavente at sue@vma.bz or 415-489-7622.



Name					
Instructor	Erica Taylor	Kaitlin Sakae	Kimi Keiko Chin	Rebecca Wright	Dario Dorella
School	Colleen L. Twomey	Lorraine Donegan	Lorraine Donegan	Colleen L. Twomey	Lorraine Leber
	Cal Poly SLO				City College of SF (CCSF)
Name					
Instructor	Darian Newman	Kajri Popat	Yashmi Manoj Shah	Jeff Vinogradoff	Thanh Le
School	Rachel Berger	Marc O'Brien	Mark Fox	Rebecca Barnes	Gocke "Blue" Kasicki
	California College of the Arts (CCA)			CSU Fresno	De Anza College
Name					
Instructor	Arlie Sophia Sarnicola	Kyle Perey	Lesly Hermoza Ruiz	Noel Quintilla	Romnel Balabis
School	Janet Green	Katherine Lee	Janet Green	Katherine Lee	Katherine Lee
	CSU East Bay				
Name					
Instructor	Emily Sobolik	Jessica Gallegos	Srta Zahid	Chalernpol Jittagasem	Mina Kasirifar
School	John Schall	Isabel Reichert	Isabel Reichert	Saskia van Kampen	Jean-Benoit Levy
	Los Medanos College	Ohlone College		San Francisco State University (SFSU)	



“Originality is the essence of true scholarship.
Creativity is the soul of the true scholar.”

– Nnamdi Azikiwe

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For more information, contact shannon@vma.bz.

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MEMBER NEWS

North California Printer Looking for Investor



A printing company located in Northern California looking for an investor to take them to the next stage of growth. This has been a strong business for over 65 years and the current owners are retiring after 45 years of service. Contact Shannon at shannon@vma.bz, or 415-710-0568 for more information.

BR Printers Acquisition Creates Perfect Book Printing Platform



BR Printers of San Jose acquired National Graphic Solutions

(NGS), of Appleton, Wisconsin, a leading print partner to the publishing industry for children's books, educational products, and the general book market. The complimentary power of the BR and NGS production platforms provides publishers with a suite of book printing, binding, and packaging solutions. They are well-equipped to handle very short run print-on-demand titles to first edition long runs or mid-range quantity reprints. brprinters.com



Devilish Designs for Olive Oil Brand Diavolicchio



Branding agency Noise 13 created a unique, fun, and bold brand look for their client Diavolicchio—an olive oil with an intensely spicy flavor thanks to the fact that it's made with ground chili peppers. Noise 13's designers honed in on the similarities between the shape of chili pepper, a devil's tongue, and a devil's horns. The clever design combines a simple design of a red and dark blue color palette and all-caps, modern sans serif type with a fun twist. noise13.com

Creative Use of Cut-Outs Captures Brand Concept



MCC Labels created a new look for their client, Precept Wines, one of the leading wine producers in the Northwest U.S. They designed a new private label line of wines called KLEAN. The new brand is based off the "healthy" trend happening in wine and spirits today, leveraging a double-entendre with the name of this 85-calorie per serving. The critical component for this design was the interior die cut.

The finished labels were printed on Killer White stock, ideal for refrigeration and ice bucket performance. The labels were finished with a grain texture emboss to replicate Estate 4, foil stamp, and emboss. This value-priced wine had a tight budget to convey the aesthetic, but with some creativity and innovation, the look was achieved. mcclabel.com

RRD Creates Commercial Print Center of Excellence

R.R. Donnelley & Sons Co. (RRD) brings new and diverse capabilities in the form of a commercial printer center of excellence to be known as Pacific Standard Print (PSP) to the region for the purpose of serving RRD client needs.



After undergoing renovation, the new 136,000-square-foot location has increased capacity for digital, sheetfed, mailing, and print fulfillment services. It boasts upgraded, best-in-class digital presses, plus 40-inch offset, sheetfed presses. PSP will offer an elevated security infrastructure for data and mailing services with an increased volume of storage to support critical warehousing and fulfillment needs throughout the region.

PSP clients will also benefit from the multitude of complementary services that RRD provides, including advanced analytics, email marketing, content, and creative services. rrd.com

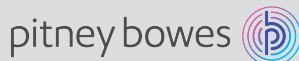
NEW MEMBERS



Nevada Presort

Nevada Presort is a mail house and presort service focused on saving clients time and money on their mailings. They put their knowledge of postal regulations to work, along with one of Northern Nevada's only Optical Character Recognition machines, to get your mail job done in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible.

Don Jassel
775-358-1066
don@nvpresort.com
www.nevadapresort.com



Pitney Bowes

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Martin.keyser@pb.com
www.pitneybowes.com



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The Art of Networking

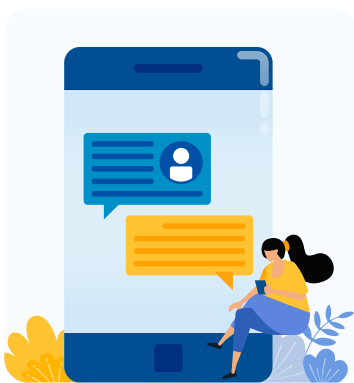
BY REVA HARRIS

Networking can feel like a numbers game: Shake as many hands as you can, hand out as many business cards as possible, and make tons of new LinkedIn connections. But this quote from Seth Godin, author and businessman, is a reminder that networking isn't about how many people you connect with, it's about how meaningful those connections are:

"The networking that matters is helping people achieve their goals, and doing it reliably and repeatedly so that over time, people have an interest in helping you achieve your goals."

A solid network is vital to growing your business and sustaining yourself in hard times. The key is to build a web of contacts, made up of potential customers, colleagues, vendors, partners, and peers. By engaging with them regularly, and having meaningful conversations, you can offer them value, and build the goodwill to receive value in return.

Sustaining Your Network through the Pandemic



What's been unique about the pandemic, compared to other crises, is the extended period in which we've been unable to gather in large groups. It's forced us to be more intentional about finding ways to connect. In previous issues of *Connected*, we've highlighted VMA members who've relied on their networks to sustain their businesses through the crisis.

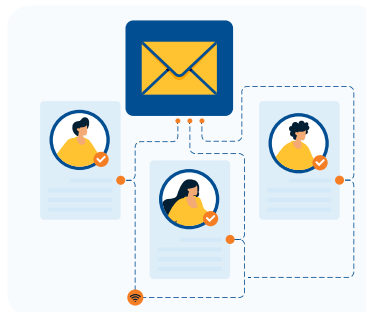
They reached out to contacts to ask how they're doing. They picked up the phone just to talk. They asked contacts what they needed help with. They connected with their peers to talk about shared issues. And along the way, they found new ways to pivot their businesses and provide value to their customers.

It's astounding to think that we're a year into the pandemic, and still unable to get together in person. But that drives home why it's so important to be persistent about building and sustaining your network.



Make the Time to Connect

Of course, it's hard to be a powerhouse networker when work piles up. Who has time for events or (virtual) coffee dates when you've got tight deadlines to meet? But a good network has to be nurtured regularly. Set weekly, monthly, or quarterly goals for attending events or catching up with acquaintances. Make it a part of your routine, just like running payroll or ordering new inventory.



Nurturing your network doesn't always mean having intense face time with your contacts. Mix up your networking activities between time-intensive tasks and quick tasks, with little things like sending a check-in email to a colleague you haven't spoken to in a while. Having a blend of

bigger and smaller tasks to work through makes networking more manageable. It also allows you to learn more about how your contacts like to stay in touch. Some may never want to have a virtual coffee date, but love to receive emails. Others may be more engaging on LinkedIn or on the phone. Mix up your activities so you can stay connected.

Prepare for Meaningful Conversations

Staying connected depends on having meaningful conversations. What makes a conversation meaningful? It should add value and make the other person feel like you're interested in getting to know them, not just making a sales pitch.



Try these conversation starters to spark an interesting, worthwhile connection:

- What are you working on?
- How did you start doing what you do?
- Is there anything you need help with?
- What's your big goal for this year?
- Do you have any lessons learned from 2020 that you'd like to share?

People like to talk about themselves, so give them a chance to open up. Not only will you learn how you can be of value to them, but you'll also present yourself as warm and relatable, instead of being focused on the end game of acquiring a new lead.



It's also a good idea to have a few go-to helpful tips you can offer new contacts. Maybe there's a podcast that you've found to be really helpful with growing your business. Maybe you want to spread the word about a great event you attended (like VMA's Collective Conversations series). Have something valuable to offer when you connect. And that sets

the foundation for a long-term, mutually beneficial relationship.

You Control the Strength of Your Network

If there's anything we've learned in the last year, it's that the world is unpredictable. But there are things we can control—you hold the power to build and sustain a strong network. The strength and size of your network is truly up to you. You control how often you engage with your contacts and the conversations you have.

It may feel hard to expand your network right now, but you can certainly deepen the relationships you do have. Think back to the Seth Godin quote, focus on the networking that matters. And what goes around, will come back around.

Building Credibility and Sustaining It with Relationships: Sales Secrets From Daily Digital Imaging

BY REVA HARRIS

Every day, Péllo Walker, President of Daily Digital Imaging, writes two personalized notes to two of his contacts. Sometimes the note contains an article that he thinks the recipient will like. Other times, he may send a photo of a new bourbon he's sharing with a fellow bourbon lover. The point is always to foster a connection. Walker has a knack for creating connections that has helped him build a robust professional network. When COVID-19 hit, that gift made all the difference. "We didn't lose a lot because we had our network," says Walker.

Credibility Opens Doors

One of Daily Digital Imaging's differentiators is its use of sustainable practices. It was recognized as the 2017 Green Business of the Year in the state of California. It's a certified Green Business through the Green America program, and the company and Walker have received numerous awards for their commitment to the environment. That commitment attracts for-profit companies who understand the value of working with vendors who care about the environment.

The print, marketing, and design firm also does a lot of business with the nonprofit sector. By serving on nonprofit boards and receiving awards for his philanthropic work, Walker gains instant credibility from prospects in that sector. "When I get in front of people, they know that I know what I'm talking about...When we work with nonprofits, I just tell them my truth, that I care. I care about your mission," he says.

Offering Value Closes Deals

"We're small enough where we want to work with companies because of a relationship and we feel good about them and they feel good about us," Walker says. Whether he's talking to a corporate client or a local nonprofit, his goal is always to provide value. One way he does this is by tracking trends in his customers' industries so he can offer them business insights: "Trends help me understand what's going on in the world and allows me to go back to clients and deliver a value proposition."

For example, in August of 2016, he noticed that permits issued for new commercial

buildings and single-family homes dropped by 26%. That meant that contractors would see a reduction in new home construction projects the following year. He reached out to contractors who he knew were focused only on new home construction and offered alternative insights to help them pivot to tenant improvements and remodeling. By understanding trends, Walker offered more than just a transactional service; he provided them with a solution to a problem that they hadn't even anticipated.

To better understand the needs of his nonprofit customers, he took a certification program for executive fundraising. He realized that nonprofits weren't running integrated campaigns like corporate marketing departments typically do. He created an automated marketing program to help his clients run integrated, personalized nurture campaigns. That commitment to delivering value closes deals. "When nonprofits work with us, they're getting something they don't get elsewhere," he points out.



1. Marketing Dictionary print campaign
2. Brochures for Five, a research-based data company for a summit in SF
3. Facebook post
4. "15 Capabilities," a self-promotional booklet brochure
5. Self-promotional business card gum package

Consistency Is King

Keeping up with trends requires Walker to consistently have his finger on the pulse of his customers' industries. Through Trustegritty, the senior networking group he runs, and a business advisory council he's a part of, Walker talks to roughly 100 CEOs per month. "I'm always getting a temperature check on different parts of the country and how people feel about things," he says.

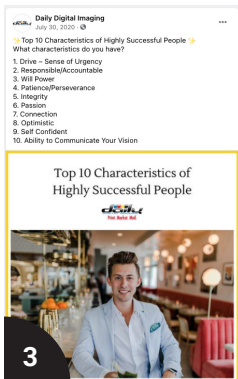
That consistency is applied to his outreach as well. In addition to his daily handwritten notes, Walker makes it a point to call 10 people he doesn't know every day. Relying on a list of decision-makers at his target companies, he points out that, while only three of the 10 pick up, "As Mark Twain said, 80% of success is just showing up. So, you have to show up and be consistent at everything you do."

“

Pello and the team at Daily Digital really know their stuff. They offered suggestions that made our first print job with them significantly better, and their turn-around was exceptional. I highly recommend them for both print and consulting.

–Steve E.

”



Making New Connections in a Virtual World

When COVID-19 turned the world on its head, like many other business owners, Walker reached out to his contacts. His goal wasn't to sell, but just to see how they were doing. While this was already a part of his process via the personalized notes, Walker notes that the pandemic has made non-salesy check-ins more commonplace: "It has changed the way we relate to each other. It's easier to offer value because they know you have no agenda."

He also realized that virtual events give him a chance to easily demonstrate his expertise in front of a large group. By asking an informed question or making a few well-placed comments, he can establish himself as a subject matter expert in a way that would be much more difficult at a typical in-person event.

However, he also recognizes the downsides to virtual interactions. "The challenge is creating that same sense of connectedness," he notes. "On Zoom you're meeting for a reason. There are no casual interactions." To get around that, he's leaning more on networking groups like VMA's Collective Conversations. He proactively introduces his contacts to colleagues or potential customers, and they do the same in return.

Walker's Guiding Principle

Through it all, Walker is still guided by the same principle that has helped his business grow thus far: "Ben Franklin asks what he can do to make the world a better place, and then assesses how he did at the end of the day. That's what I do, every night." Based on Daily Digital Imaging's growth and endurance through the pandemic, it's serving him well.

Pello Walker,
President
Daily Digital Imaging



The Power of a Good First Impression

BY TAMMY TROUT



Tim, Jennifer, Michelle, and Erin during their monthly sales team meeting reviewing their sales report.

The famous quote, “You only have one chance to make a first impression,” has been attributed to several people. No matter who originally said it, the concept is alive and well with First Impressions Printing Inc. in Hayward, California, a custom wholesale envelope manufacturer and printer.

First Impressions is led by Jennifer Stang, the managing partner. The team includes Erin Cousart, print project coordinator, Michelle Hall in customer service, and Tim Kelly in business development. The company specializes in envelopes, small format offset printing, and has a full digital department. They primarily work within the trade with other printers and brokers. With five highly specialized Halm Jet Presses, they can produce 30,000 impressions each machine in an hour at top speeds. That capacity enables the company to service a core group of loyal customers as well as take on other periodic projects.

“Since we are wholesale, we really do just want to take care of the wholesale business and not get involved with direct clients,” says Tim. “We want to support customers by providing consistent high-quality printing and service on every order.”

They focus on making a quality impression from their first interaction. Quality is the key word—from the in-house processes to the sales promise. For example, there’s only one phone number for the customer service staff so callers always speak to an actual person versus reaching a voicemail. Requests for quotes receive a response within three hours. “There are four people in the front office along with me, and the phone has to be answered,” says Erin. “We don’t let calls go to voicemail; that’s not the impression we want to give when someone calls. The goal on the phone—make it happen!”

Think Beyond Traditional Techniques

Prior to the pandemic, the company focused on email marketing to prospects to either get in the door for a meeting or to send monthly promotions. The First Impressions team is always brainstorming creative ways to appreciate the customer. During the pandemic their email campaigns weren’t achieving the desired results. “People just weren’t as responsive,” says Jennifer.

So, Tim reverted to tried and true methods from his decades in sales and management. He got on the phone and sent personal emails and cards to clients and prospects. “One of the techniques I found successful was doing research in the VMA Buyer’s Guide to find customers we haven’t seen for a while to see how they’re doing,” says Tim. “I wouldn’t go in looking for business. I wanted to see how people were doing, and they told me their stories. We’d get jobs in return because people remembered that.”



Plant Manager, Tony and Digital Department Manager, Jeff running through our 7-step QC process prior to running a print job.



First Impressions sales folder and brochure



Annual calendar First Impressions gives to their loyal and new clients



Establish Long-Term Relationships—"People are Everything."

Management made the decision to close their facility to everyone except employees to help create a safe working environment. Following just a couple of days after the closure, First Impressions realized they had customers who needed essential print and developed a plan to safely operate and accommodate essential visitors. "We had our struggles and slow times," says Jennifer. "But we ended the year with about 75 percent of what we did the year before and a very strong group of customers that we'll go into the future with."

One art director came in for a press check for a client and recognized Tim from one of VMA's Collective Conversations virtual networking events. They struck up a discussion about the business, which later resulted in another job. Another recent customer resulted from two and a half years of regularly calling to check in. Eager for the opportunity, the persistence and dedication finally paid off. "I was honest up front that they were looking for a tough job that was going to take an extra day because we want to do it right," says Tim. "That honesty and attention to detail was one of the things that kept them coming back with more business."

First Impression has a motto that says, "Deadlines are to be met...Period!" This dedication to keeping their promises and keeping their clients happy creates long-term repeat business. They also have an attitude of always putting the customer first and will always accommodate any

special requests as part of the "First Impressions Experience."

Deliver Exceptional Quality

Since Tim and the sales staff have limited face-to-face contact with customers, getting any face time requires creativity. As part of the commitment to ensure total quality, Tim often personally makes deliveries. "When I first started, I went out and visited every customer. I went and saw their business," says Tim. "You can really learn a lot by being there and visually seeing it. Since the pandemic, we will deliver more than the product. We've gone out with samples, proofs, or even goodies for our clients, just to stay in touch."

That service extends to personal thank you notes from front-office staffers to simply express appreciation for doing business with the company. "It's not about the sale, it's about making sure that we're doing the things right for customers to help grow their business, because whatever we can do to help them grow will translate to growth for us too," says Jennifer.

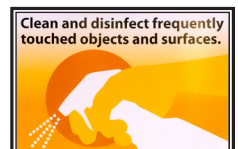
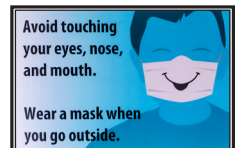
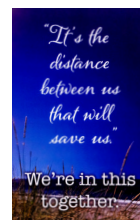
"In our industry we have to continually adapt and improve," says Tim. "We practice the concept of 'kaizen,' meaning, always looking for continuous improvement in all that we do. I've always found in sales that if you walk in looking for the job, you're not going to get it. But, if you walk in looking to see what you can do to help them and let them know they've got options, you'll make a good impression, and they'll call you." Once again, a positive impression wins out in the end.



Tony & Darryl, Lead Halm Jet Press Operators running through the 7-step QC process on the Offset floor

Standing Together by Standing Apart

Inside are some complimentary posters from your friends at:



Complimentary poster set designed, printed, and distributed by First Impressions to the community to help stop the spread of COVID-19.



DEFINE YOUR VALUE PROPOSITIONS!

LESLIE GROENE, BUSINESS CONSULTANT, GROENE CONSULTING

You know your customers. You know their journey. Now you need to fit yourself into their needs in the best way possible. This comes from defining your competitive advantage.

Your competitive advantage is what sets you apart from the competition. Start by asking a few simple questions:

- Why do customers buy from us?
- Why do customers buy from our competitors, and not us?
- Why do some potential customers not buy at all?
- What do we need to do to be successful in the future?

Remember that customers buy benefits, not features. When describing your value proposition, it's easy to get caught up in talking about you. Instead, flip the script and talk about what your product will do for your customers.

A strong competitive advantage:

- Reflects the competitive strength of your business
- Is preferably, but not necessarily, unique
- Is clear and simple
- May change over time as competitors try to steal your idea
- Must be supported by ongoing market research

Leverage current client relationships! Leading with your competitive advantage and the value it provides is a key sales strategy. Once you

have that down, another important sales strategy is to leveraging current client relationships to generate leads.

When asking for an intro, remember:

- **A good introduction is two-sided.** As the person in the middle, you're asking your client to vouch for you. Reach out to your most loyal customers and ask if they know anyone that would benefit from your product or service.
- **Stay in touch, even when they can't buy from you.** Ask how you can help or support them, even if they stop being a customer. It's a small gesture that can pay off in the long run. Things don't stay the same for long.
- **Use LinkedIn.** See if anyone you know can introduce you to one of your prospects.

You're missing out on a huge opportunity if your sales plan only focuses on finding new business leads. Word-of-mouth, introductions, and current customers can be your most solid lead for growth.

Leslie Groene is a business consultant, sales coach, and author with a background in the paper and print industry in the positions of sales rep and sales manager. She has been featured in many PIA and PrUA affiliate markets as a speaker and business development trainer focus on revenue generation and profit growth while coaching thousands of sales people. www.groeneconsulting.com.



CAN I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION PLEASE?

BILL FARQUHARSON, SALES COACH, AUTHOR, AND PRESENTER

I don't think I need to tell you how hard it is to get in touch with a prospect these days? Some might say it's easier to get a teenager's attention. Or, it feels like all decision-makers

have joined the Witness Protection Program. Here are two quick ideas for finding them:

- **Get smart**—One key reason why you're not hearing back from people might be because of the quality of your message. It is possible that you're not saying anything of value to the prospect if the following sounds like the messages you leave: "Hi, my name is Bill. I am calling to talk about your <<insert boring product or service here>>." Seriously, would YOU return that call?

You can get what you want when you help the customer get what they want. And you can find what they want and need by checking out their website. Have a look before you call and you'll be, as we say here in Boston, "wicked smart". Increase the quality of your sales call through pre-call research. Customers want to know you understand their business challenges.

- **Tell a story**—You've just completed a project that went well. Very well. Before moving on to your next order, quote, or task, why not blow your own horn? Open a PowerPoint file and set up four slides. Slide 1: This is the problem a client had. Slide 2: Here's our amazing solution. Slide 3: These were the results. Slide 4: Here's something about our company. Next, to make it extra fancy, add a voice-over. Finally, upload it to YouTube.

Voila! You have a story to tell. Now take the URL and use it in an email ("Hey! Take 2 minutes and learn how our client got a double-digit response rate.") or put it in your signature line. Stories sell, especially when you use pictures. Be visual! If you have found success with others, you have some credibility.

Given the amount of publicly available information, there is absolutely no excuse for making a "Got anything I can quote on?" sales call. Learn the problem. Solve the problem. Earn the order. Tell the story. Repeat.

Bill Farquharson is a sales trainer and presenter for the print, signage, label, creative packaging industries. Bill is the creator of Sales Vault, a sales training portal filled with valuable content and resources to help graphic arts professionals increase their sales. VMA members get a special deal. Bill can be reached at BillFarquharson.com or 781-934-7036.

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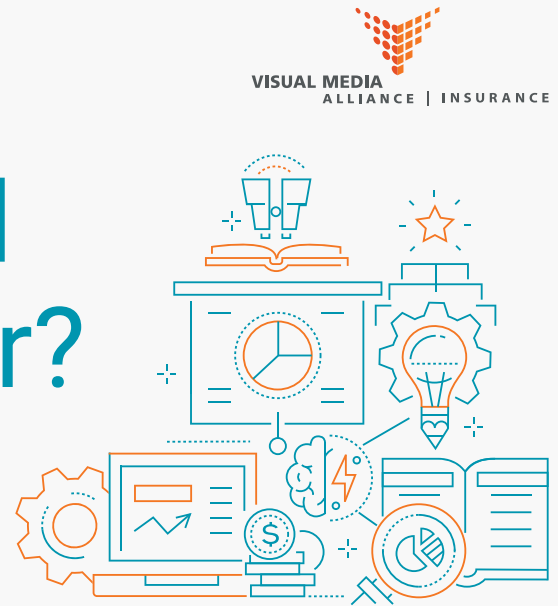


665 3rd Street, Suite 500
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How Has Your Business Changed Over The Past Year?

Seventy-five percent of U.S. businesses are underinsured, and 40% of small business owners have no insurance at all.

* When faced with a disaster or lawsuit, many small businesses don't have insurance to cover their costs.



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