

## Upcoming Events

### SAVE THE DATES:

**ACT 6 Experience Set For April 20 to 22, 2016.** Samir "Mr. Magazine" Husni, Ph.D., will host the sixth ACT Experience, presented by the Magazine Innovation Center of the Meek School of Journalism and New Media at The University of Mississippi. Leading industry executives will discuss the future of print in a digital age.

## Company News

**Time Inc. Books**, producer of special interest publications for Time Inc., selected the James G. Elliott Co., Inc. to sell advertising.

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## Relationship Selling: On the Wane or More Important than Ever?

### President's Letter

Concurrently with the rise of digital media, there have been big changes in the way media planners and buyers do their jobs that sellers of media advertising ignore at their peril. To help our company's sales efforts, we wanted to know what is driving buyers, so the Elliott Co. teamed with Kantar Media SRDS to find out through research. We have made the results public and the study has been downloaded hundreds of times. For the past year, Steve Davis, President of Kantar Media SRDS and I have given several talks about the Study of Media Planners and Buyers conducted by both of our companies in 2013 and 2015. In 2015, we have presented at venues such as ABM (now Connectiv), AM&P (Association Media & Publishing), AABP (Alliance of Area Business Publishers), and the FOLIO: Show.



This is a brief recap of the highlights presented at the FOLIO: Show in a panel talk entitled, "Relationship Selling: On the Wane, or More Important than Ever?", in which Steve and I were joined by Joe Landry, EVP, Publishing of Here Media.

In addition to the raw data from 379 respondents, Steve Davis added context by relating the responses of his team's Council of Media Advisors when they reviewed the results. Above all, it is clear that the workload at agencies is staggering. More than half of our respondents reported that they work for 3+ clients, and 57% work on 4+ brands. On average, they recommended, bought or helped purchase \$25.9M of advertising. That's huge; no wonder so many appear to be overwhelmed and why it is so hard to get them out to lunch these days.

Planners and buyers not only buy print, but 88% are involved in digital media and 69% in radio. If they were to see everyone who wants to see them it would mean hundreds of appoint-

ments with hundreds of salespeople. It's just not possible. There is very little time to see salespeople, so they call them in when they need them. Agencies plan and buy on their clients' schedules, not on the publishers' schedules, and they tend to pay attention only to what they need for current projects. The Council of Media Advisors made it a special point to say that they resent those last-minute fire-sale calls from sellers who say, "We're closing an issue and I have a remnant page! Hurry and it's yours!"

### What Media Types Are They Buying?

#### All types

- 88% in Digital Media
- 73% in Out-of-Home Media
- 72% in Consumer Magazine Media
- 69% in Radio



Resources used always or often by respondents include syndicated research (81%) and SRDS (59%). Agencies rely less on input from sellers and publishers (51%). That can be a real problem for a salesperson trying to get a new product into the buy because media planners rely heavily on previous advertising plans (88%). Of course, the client ultimately has the deciding vote, but most planners go with the flow early, always or often seeking client input 86% of the time.

Today, buys happen fast and there is often no second chance for those media that miss one. Most agencies (83%) now use an RFP (Request for Proposal) process. The timing can be brutal; 92% typically allow 10 or fewer workdays for RFP completion. About 42% usually allow only 1 to 5 workdays. If a salesperson is sick or on vacation without reliable back-up, that's just tough luck. If someone at headquarters does not supply the right numbers to the salesperson or whoever is answering the RFP, there may be



Photo credit: Lindsay Morrison, Kantar Media SRDS

no time for a correction. Worse yet, only 19% of the respondents always or often give denied or excluded media a chance to resubmit. In other words, any salesperson failing to receive an RFP or to complete it on time has a good chance of missing the buy entirely until the next campaign. That could be a year away (although the good news is that an increasing number of advertisers plan sporadically, so there may be more than one opportunity per year).

What does it take to win the business at the agency level? There are a lot of factors, but all (well, 99%) of the respondents expect a discount. On average, they expect a 29% discount off rate card; 42% expect at least a 30% discount. That has big implications for the way publishers set rates; most publishers now inflate their published rates so they can deal with these demands from the agency.

All of the factors outlined above help explain the shift in the selling skills of the successful media salesperson. Because there is less opportunity to entertain out of the office today, being a convivial host with the ability to provide tickets to events or to get a good table or great restaurant is far less important than the ability to give agency people what they need, when they need it for the job they are doing at that moment.

The study did not address agency turnover, but we know from experience that it is significant. So deep, strong relationships with agency people have given way to fast-moving, task-oriented ad hoc relationships. In that sense, we would say they are waning.

So how can the salesperson really make an impact? The panel agreed that the client is

key. The research shows that client directives are factors in advertising schedule changes always or often, just behind budget cuts (74%) and lack of performance (64%). Joe Landry pointed out that the LGBT market served by Here Media has always required that his salespeople find a champion at the client to help sell their magazines. For many years, the agencies would implement the buys based upon a client directive but few would go out on a limb to recommend controversial media. Although that is changing now as LGBT moves more mainstream, Here Media's emphasis on the client is not decreasing. If anything, it is becoming more important.

So with all of these changes, we have come full circle. Forty years ago, sales trainers told young advertising salespeople to "Sell the Client and Service the Agency." Every sales manager had some variant of this phrase, but it boils down to "Find the person who can say "Yes!" and put your main relationship-building efforts there." ■

*Download a FREE report of the results from the Study of Media Planners and Buyers conducted by Kantar Media SRDS and the Elliott Co. at [SRDS.com/JGEReport2015](http://SRDS.com/JGEReport2015)*

*For the past six years, the Elliott Co. has supported the work of the Magazine Innovation Center at The University of Mississippi's Meek School of Journalism and New Media, led by Samir Husni, "Mr. Magazine®." Graduates of the program have interned in our New York and Chicago offices, and one of these enthusiastic young people is currently a full-time employee in our New York office in creative services. Peter Englert's contributions include creative design of event programs, media kits and other collateral, and banner ads. We asked Peter to write for *Ads&Ideas* on a topic of his own choosing, and are pleased to present the following:*

## Thoughts of a Millennial in the Magazine Industry

By Peter Englert

After graduating with a degree with a magazine emphasis, I am often asked my opinion on the topic of "print is dying." I really don't see that happening any time soon, and I'm a Millennial. Sure, it's rare to ever find me without my phone in my hand or right in front of my face, but when it comes to reading a book or magazine, I would much rather feel the texture of the pages between my fingertips than to be glued to a tablet swiping left or right.

With print, I don't worry about my issue not being charged or my book crashing. Many magazines have gone through the transition from print to digital, but are we ignoring the magazines that started digitally and have now started to print such as *Allrecipes Magazine* or *Creativ Magazine*? We could even bring up magazines that have spawned from television series and shows like *Rachael Ray Every Day* or *HGTV Magazine*.

My aspiration for myself in the magazine industry is to work with creative and design. To be a part of the creation of a print magazine has got to feel pretty great. When a story is published in print, it's complete and there's no turning back. When a story is published digitally, it still is possible to remove it from the site or make a spelling correction. I don't think print is going away any time soon, but it definitely must evolve to remain relevant, innovative, and engaging in such a digitally driven world. ■