No limits to ad creativity

When Multimedia Sales Executive Stephanie Dodson of the Hot Springs Village Voice asked General Manager Jennifer Allen’s permission to create her own ads, there was some skepticism at first. Dodson’s boss was worried she wouldn’t be successful at both creating and selling ads for the paper.

Those concerns have vanished. Dodson’s “Live Without Limits” ad for Felix Brace & Limb took Best of Show at the APA Better Newspaper Advertising Awards last week. The ad, created last fall for the Reader’s Choice special section, shows a runner wearing a prosthetic leg against a background of a lake surrounded by mountains.

“I wanted to design something that led the reader’s eye to the thank-you copy and, at the same time, emphasized what Felix Brace & Limb does for their patients,” Dodson said. The leaping figure propels the eye to the copy, and the white space gives the message room to breathe.

When she came to the paper two-and-a-half years ago, Dodson had sales experience with an automotive parts company. “I often went on cold calls, and I discovered I really enjoyed the freedom of going out and making connections, building relationships with business people,” she said.

She credits Robert Lane, former production manager at the Hot Springs Village Voice, as being instrumental in her graphic design education. Though design is not her primary job, Dodson puts a lot of thought into each ad, customizing the graphics and copy to her clients’ specific needs.

“I get a good feeling when I present an ad I’ve created to help my customer. I think doing both helps me be more productive at sales and design,” Dodson said.

Ad Conference leads to some ‘Hot Ideas’

Want to see more?

Visit our APA website and social media pages for more coverage and information from the 2018 ad conference.

A complete list of the 2018 APA Better Newspaper Advertising Awards winners can be found on the APA website under the Ad Clearinghouse tab in a folder named 2018 Advertising Conference. There you can also download all first, second and third place winners.

To see more candid photos from the conference, visit our Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/Arkansas-Press-Association-218467510595/ or find us on Twitter at https://twitter.com/ARPressAssoc.

Congrats to the winners of the 2018 Hot Ideas Contest at the APA Ad Conference. From left to right, Kelly FreudenSprung of the Saline Courier in Benton (2nd Place), Daphne Morton of the Stone County Leader in Mountain View (3rd Place) and Todd Edwards of the Harrison Daily Times (1st Place). Ashley Wimberley, third from left, presented the cash prizes.
APA special award nominations open

It’s time once again to be making nominations for the annual APA “special awards” to be presented Friday, June 29, at the annual SuperConvention at the Inn of the Ozarks in Eureka Springs.

The nomination form can be found on the APA website at this link: https://tinyurl.com/y9cmv2ya.

The special awards include: Golden 50 Service Award, Distinguished Service Award, Headliner of the Year, Journalism Educator Award and the Freedom of Information Award.

The deadline for nominations is Friday, March 30. The APA board of directors will select the honorees from the nominations submitted at their annual spring meeting on April 5.

We want to know about your new hires, retires and promotions!

Send your staffing changes to info@arkansaspress.org to be updated online and included in our weekly bulletin and monthly newsletter.

Industry Quote of the Week

“The truth may set you free, but first it is going to tick you (or at least a lot of other people) off. This is why free speech requires constitutional protection, especially in a democratic society. Free speech may be the most essential vehicle for getting the truth out. But the truth, as anyone minimally versed in history knows, is rarely popular at first.”

– Bret Stephens,
The New York Times

Let Us Know

And the Winner is...

Sweepstakes Winners – Kristi Nall, Advance Monticellonian, Monticello; Samantha Walker, Advance Monticellonian, Monticello; Rusty Fraser, Stone County Leader, Mountain View; Staci Miller, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Little Rock; Kelly Freudensprung, Saline Courier, Benton.

Weekly Winners – (Front row, left to right) Samantha Walker, Advance Monticellonian, Monticello; Kristi Nall, Advance Monticellonian, Monticello; LeAnn Brown, Sheridan Headlight; Daphne Morton, Stone County Leader, Mountain View; Brian Huntley, Northwest Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Fayetteville; (back row, left to right) Stephanie Dodson, Hot Springs Village Voice, Jennifer Allen, Gatehouse Media; Shantelle Redden, The Times Dispatch, Walnut Ridge; Carrie Johnson, Pacesetting Times, Horseshoe Bend; David Hoye, Carroll County News, Berryville; Ed Coates, Stone County Leader, Mountain View; Opal Dennis, Madison County Record, Huntsville.

Daily Winners – (Front row, left to right) Debbie Melvin, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Little Rock; Emily Partridge, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Little Rock; Sheri Underdown, Harrison Daily Times; Debe Johnson, The Sentinel-Record, Hot Springs; Pat Stuckey, Saline Courier, Benton; Julie Albritton, Saline Courier, Benton; (back row, left to right) Vicki Morgan, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Little Rock; LeAnne Hunter, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Little Rock; Wendy Miller, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Little Rock; Cody Graves, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Little Rock; Staci Miller, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Little Rock; Brian Huntley, Northwest Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Fayetteville; Jon-Claude Whillock, Harrison Daily Times; Brandon Collins, Harrison Daily Times; Kelly Freudensprung, Saline Courier, Benton; Ronnie Bell, El Dorado News-Times.
1) Lori Freeze of the Stone County Leader in Mountain View reviews the APA Networks Program flyer. 2) Weekly newspaper representatives participate in a round table discussion, sharing successes and challenges. 3) Featured conference speaker Kelly Wirges presents to the group the necessity of keeping your sales funnel full. 4) Debe Johnson of The Sentinel-Record in Hot Springs shared a hot idea at the Friday morning breakfast. 5) Attendees from the state’s daily newspapers share ideas. 6) Shantelle Redden of The Times-Dispatch in Walnut Ridge with one of her many first place awards.
Newspapers representatives from across the state showcase their first place awards: 1) the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette team 2) the Harrison Daily Times team 3) LeeAnn Brown with the Sheridan Headlight 4) Pat Stuckey, Kelly Freudensprung and Julie Albritton with the Saline Courier in Benton, and 5) Stephanie Dodson and Jennifer Allen with the Hot Springs Village Voice.
On the Move

Our society is in the age of now. Long gone are the days when people had to rely on snail mail, dial-up internet, research via card catalogs, look for directions on a map and wait for the 5 o’clock news or tomorrow’s newspaper to find out what is happening in the world.

Thanks to the digital transformation, people expect instant gratification more than ever. High speed internet networks and Google make it possible to look up virtually any piece of information in seconds. Products can be ordered, shipped and delivered sometimes in the same day. GPS devices give turn-by-turn directions to new destinations. And news is shared in real-time through social media and news outlet websites.

This shift to the age of now is especially striking as millennials, who have grown up with technology at their fingertips, enter the workforce and become major consumers across industries. This generation doesn’t remember what it was like before the digital world and are a major force in driving the changes in consumer behaviors that impact businesses of all types.

Newspapers and news organizations are not unique in needing to adapt to the way consumer behavior is changing from the digital transformation. With more news available than ever, from more sources than ever, accessible from multiple devices, it is critical for print and digital news outlets to find new and innovative ways to reach audiences, provide marketing value to advertisers and engage with communities.

Vivial understands how complex today’s digital marketplace is and the challenge for news outlets, marketers and businesses of all types to find the right tools to keep pace with ever-changing consumer behaviors and preferences. Our new white paper, “Marketing in the Age of Dwindling Attention Spans,” looks at the key ways consumer behavior is changing and provides tips and solutions to help newsrooms effectively reach audiences in today’s “now” society, as well as provide innovative and valuable digital solutions to advertising partners.

Some of these tools and strategies include:

**Information now:** As consumers are looking for instant, relevant and accurate information, newspapers will need to be at the top of search results. Search Engine Optimization, custom content and voice activated search will all be critical to help news outlets stay relevant to audiences and be a desirable partner for advertisers.

**Speed:** As attention spans dwindle, so does the patience for poorly performing or slow loading websites. Websites and digital ads that load quickly and are optimized for mobile will help capture and keep users’ attention.

**Visual Content:** If pictures are worth a thousand words, then videos are worth millions. As consumers view more and more video online, newsrooms will need to incorporate video content into their coverage, as well as offer video advertising options.

**Accurate Information:** Consumers have less tolerance than ever for inaccurate information, and rightly so. With today’s hectic pace, there is no time for errors. Businesses of all types need to ensure everything is accurate and up-to-date – including content on websites and all directory listings.

**Simple Solutions:** If consumers are overworked and harried keeping up with digital information overload, businesses and marketers are even more overwhelmed trying to keep up with the multiple channels and opportunities to connect with consumers on their purchasing journey. As news organizations provide digital marketing solutions to local businesses, it is essential to offer solutions that save them time while effectively reaching the right audience at the right time.