

Sales Person of the year  
Kelly Schmidt The Star News, Medford WI

Kelly has been leading the sales team for twenty years. She was originally hired as an ad designer who kept coming up with ideas for increasing sales. It was a natural fit to move her into sales as the sales manager. She is a true leader who is not only passionate about the newspaper sales and growth, but also her customers success. She offers her customers great service and works to keep them on budget.

She has worked hard to bring ad inches in our products with new sponsorship pages, special section ideas and new insert customers. The insert revenue is back to pre-pandemic levels. Kelly also is a team player and works hard to get sales proposals into her sales reps hands to give them the tools to increase their sales.

One of her accounts was bought out by a much larger, corporate business this year. She already had the advertising commitments for the year in place but now they were under new ownership. She worked with the local and regional managers to earn their confidence and managed to keep their committed advertising in place for the rest of the year. Some of the stores changed brands so she did her research and helped the designers build ads that were in sync with the new brand. The new branding also created some additional revenue for us in our printing area.

Kelly works closely with individual advertisers putting their needs ahead of simply making that month's sales goals and building long-term relationships built on mutual trust and respect.

"Kelly is an excellent sales representative and a pleasure to work with. She always meets our needs, but is not pushy about trying to sell us on things that would not benefit us," said Ryan Lemke co-owner of Medford Motors, our local Ford Dealership. He noted this level of trust makes it easier to say yes when she does bring in new ideas for them to consider.

With less staff and the change in routes, she has taken on additional customers and sells more specialty sections in different areas. This has also brought about more package selling for herself and the rest of our sales staff. She put together a package for three of our local events this summer to sell all three in one stop (or at least make the commitment). This brought in an additional \$3,400 in revenue for one newspaper.

When we were discussing more ad revenue in our newspapers and the need to fill premium spots she created a "Buy Now, Pay Later" promotion. The promotion had advertisers purchase ads now for the entire school year and included congratulatory signature ads. We ended up selling out all of our front page ads for three newspapers while the promotion was going on. The promotion also solved another problem for us - the time it took to sell the congratulatory ads before they run. They are now presold for the rest of the school year.

Kelly is also willing to help in other areas when we need help in the front office or stuffing inserts when we are short in the mail room.

When she isn't working on bringing in revenue, she helps us save money. When we were discussing the high credit card fees, she worked with our bookkeeper to get our high dollar accounts switched over to ACH payments. She also worked with a new credit card company to get us switched to a company with lower fees and better service for our customers.

Kelly continues to push forward at a time when ad sales are getting harder to come by. She believes in the print product, she knows newspaper ads work, and she motivates others to follow her lead. Kelly meets and exceeds the requirements for Sales person of the year.