

HOW TO START YOUR OWN HIGHLY PROFITABLE SHOPPING CENTER PAPERS

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HOW TO START YOUR OWN HIGHLY PROFITABLE SHOPPING CENTER PAPERS

One of the easiest of all businesses to establish, publishing shopping center papers - can make you very rich - almost as fast as finding gold, or inheriting an oil well.

Revenue and profits come from two main sources: The businesses in the shopping center your paper serves, and the people reading your paper. It doesn't matter that there's already a "Shopper's Paper" in your area, or that you know nothing about the publishing business and don't own a printing press.

The first thing is to understand the specific needs of your market. The stores, shops and businesses in the downtown area advertise to reach all the people, and thus, they're hurting from the competition of similar stores, shops and businesses in the neighborhood shopping centers closer to where the people actually live. Yet, these shopping center stores, shops and businesses **ONLY SERVE CUSTOMERS LIVING WITHIN A 5-MILE RADIUS OF THEIR BUSINESS LOCATION!**

So, the thing to do is organize a plan, and then work that plan. Contact the store owners or managers of the stores in each shopping center in your area. You can include stores or shops and businesses not in the shopping center itself, but clustered within the same immediate area. However, it's important that your emphasis be placed on the individuality of each shopping center.

Explain to each of these business people that you're starting a "shoppers paper" that will carry advertising only for businesses in that particular shopping center. With this kind of "local advertising media," the stores, shops and other businesses need not worry about competition, nor have to bear the advertising costs of city-wide circulation.

The second selling point is your distribution or circulation system. Take a section of your city street map; draw a 5-mile circle around each shopping center; then take it to your local quick print shop, and have him give you several printed copies blown up to twice the original size.

Then as you're selling each business owner, show him the shopping center location on your map with the 5-mile circle around it. Explain that your door-to-door distributors leave a copy at each home or apartment within that circle only. This means you'll have to estimate how many homes or apartments there are within each shopping center's customer circle.

Getting your papers out to all of these homes and apartments needn't be that big a problem. Simply talk with the 7th and 8th grade counselors at the schools within the service circle. Arrange to pay the counselors \$15 per thousand papers delivered for you. The idea is to get the counselors to line up the students to do the delivering for you, and pay them a percentage of the total you give him. The same plan can be worked with boy scout and/or girl scout troops. You might even contact the youth organizations at the churches within the service circle, and propose your delivery operation as a fund-raising project.

At the bottom line, the businesses gathered in or near each shopping center will buy advertising space in your paper because your rates will be cheaper; you'll be carrying advertising for

a specific location only; and your distribution will be direct to their customers only.

You can begin, and handle all phases of your business operation single-handedly, but after the first couple of editions, you'll make much more money by hiring others to do the selling for you. Simply run an ad in your weekend newspapers, promising big in comes to commission type advertising sales people. Word your ad so that those interested call you on the phone.

When they call - get their name, address and phone number. Then explain that you're looking for just a few top-notch go- getters who can handle several thousand dollars a week in advertising commissions from individual merchants located in neighborhood shopping centers. Ask them to tell you a little bit about themselves, and then invite them to a get-acquainted meeting in the banquet or meeting room you've reserved in a local restaurant or motel. Give them the time, and date, then tell them you'll see them at the meeting.

At the meeting, show them a prototype or dummy of one of your papers. Tell them they'll each be assigned a territory that includes three shopping centers. You then explain/teach them the reasons why there's big money in shopping center papers just as I've explained to you.

Explain your advertising rates - \$10 per column inch for a press run/circulation of 5,000; \$15 for 10,000; and/or \$20 for 15,000 copies distributed - and that you pay 50% for each sale.

Each paper has room for \$1,400 worth of advertising as a single 8 by 11 sheet printed on both sides; double that for an 11 by 17 sheet folded in half; or 4-times that much as two 11 by 17 sheets. Multiply the salesman's commission of \$700 per paper times three shopping centers, and you're talking about an opportunity for each of them to make \$2,100 per week - assuming that you publish your papers on a weekly schedule.

Remember, your basic idea should be to create an individual "shoppers paper" for as many different shopping centers as possible. Because of the closeness of prospective advertisers in a shopping center, a good salesman will be able to sign all the stores in at least three different shopping centers in a week.

Once you've explained the marketing philosophy behind your papers, and the money potentials available, you should have all the eager salesmen you care to sign on. Remember, each sales person is assigned three different shopping centers - you give him a dummy of your paper for each of his shopping centers, with the space availabilities marked - send him out to fill those spaces with paid advertisers - and you'll both be home free!

Whenever possible, ask for and get your money up-front or at the time of the sale. In many instances, this won't be possible, so you'll need some sort of standard contract. A short visit to your local community college advertising instruction department, or your local public library for a look at a few instruction books on how to draw up a space advertising contract, will give you a form to copy and use as your own. Billing your advertisers at the end of 30-days will bring in lots of sales, but it will also require a bookkeeper/secretary and statements as well as letterhead envelopes and postage.

Allowing your advertisers to buy now and pay later will also require that you allow your salesmen to "draw" against the commission they have coming. This too will present some special problems, namely a need for operating capital. Most of the time you'll be able to sell or factor your

accounts receivable for about 80% of the total due. When you do this, you'll be giving up another 20% of your gross income, but you will have immediate cash available. The thing you must do is weigh your operating costs against the overall benefits and make your decision based upon these factors.

The design, layout and production of your paper should be quite simple. Visit a local stationary and/or office supplies store - pick up a blue printers pencil, some larger transfer (rub-on) letters (either 60-point or 72-point size should be sufficient for your needs), and also - pick up a pad of "fade out" graph paper and a roll or two of border tape.

Use the rub-on letters to print or write the masthead or title of each of your shopping center's papers at the top of the graph paper. With your border tape and a razor blade, make a U-shaped frame around the page, a half inch in from the outside edge of the paper.

If you're getting started from your "kitchen table," and using a typewriter, make sure your type is "elite" or the small type. Now, measure the inside of your frame from the bottom of your masthead to the top of your border tape at the bottom of your frame; and from side to side, measuring from the inside edges of your border tape along the sides. You should end up with a space 9 inches deep by 7 inches wide.

Take these measurements to your local print shop and ask them for the dimensions of a space 30% larger. This should amount to a space 10 3/4 by 13 1/2 inches - so ask him for some 11 by 14 inch paper. Scrap paper that has a clean backside will do quite nicely.

With your blue printers pencil, lay out a frame 10 3/4 by 13 1/2 inches - then divide the 10 3/4 width into seven equal columns. Run the paper into your typewriter and type out the classified type ads you have to set. If you have a camera ready ad that's too large for your regular column dimensions, paste it into position on this sheet. When you have this page all "written" or pasted up, take it to your printer and have him reduce it to 70% of its current size and run off a couple of copies for you. Cut out this reduced copy and paste it inside your master frame, add any proper sized camera ready ads and you're ready to take your paper to press.

Almost all shopping center papers start out as one page circulars printed on both sides, and put together on the "kitchen table" as I've described here. Working alone and trying to start from scratch, you probably won't have all your available space sold when you go to press. If this is the way it works out for you, simply fill in the empty spaces with ads of your own.

Promotional ads inviting people to call you, for example, for ad rate information, and to place their ads. Also, some of your better mail order offers. In order to give the impression of lots of ads from lots of different people, enlist the help of your relatives and friends - allow them to advertise a For Sale or Trade item free. It's important that you seemingly have ads from a lot of different people with lots of different phone numbers and/or addresses listed.

For these classified ads, you should charge \$1 per line, and hence, the name "Dollar Papers." Don't forget, your second source of income will be garnered from people who have seen or read your paper, and place ads of their own as a result.

Once you've got separate pages - a front and a back - for your first paper ready, simply take it to your quick-print shop and have him run off the number of copies you've promised to circulate for your advertisers. Have him print it on yellow or orange 20 pound bond, or even recycled construction paper.

Until you really get rolling, you can hire a couple of kids to hand out your papers to everyone as they drive into the shopping center parking lot, drop off a stack for check-out stand giveaways at each store or shop in the shopping center, and/or persuade a couple of newspaper carriers to include one with each newspaper they deliver. Another fast hand-out method is to hire a student to give one to each bus rider as he gets off the bus at busy "park and ride" locations.

As your shopping center papers become known, you take on sales people to do the selling for you; when you have to have more space to handle the requests for advertising space, contact a larger printer who works with web presses and newsprint paper. Look around, and you'll find one who will handle all your typesetting, layout, printing and even bulk delivery to your distribution pick-up points. Expanding to tabloid production will lower your production costs, give you greater efficiency and result in more profits for your business.

Where there is really tough competition, many publishers of Shopping Center Papers include stories about the shopping center - what the land was used for before it was developed as a shopping center - profiles on the different store owners, where they're from and what they did before opening their store or shop - and news of community interest within the customer circle. Many increase their incomes by running mail order opportunity ads from dealers in all parts of the country.

Basically, a shopping center paper is the same as a mail order ad sheet. The big difference is that it serves as an advertising showcase for a small circle of merchants in a specific area, and is circulated among the people most likely to do their shopping in that specific area. Your success depends upon how well you serve that small circle of merchants; each circle has a need for an advertising showcase of its own, and it will be to your benefit to turn away advertising requests from merchants outside that circle.

The only advertising you'll have to do is via the quality and image you project with each issue or edition of your papers. There are a number of popularity-building promotions you can, and should run: free ads for baby-sitting and/or child care services; \$100 worth of free groceries if the shopper spots his picture or name in your paper; and free merchandise or service for solving picture puzzles. Don't look for much free publicity or help from newspapers, radio and/or TV stations in your area - at least, not until you're very well established, because you are in direct competition with them.

As mentioned earlier, this is an easy business to organize, requires no special education or training, and will pretty much perpetuate itself once you're beyond the start-up stages. The important thing of course, is the opportunity for at least one such paper in even the smallest of communities. The profit potential in even small to medium-sized cities is almost beyond belief...

You have an idea, and I've provided the organizational details to make it work for you - it's working very profitably for a lot of entrepreneurs in a number of locations around the country -the

only thing missing now, is action on your part. Get with it, and start enjoying the fruits of your own success!