

Subscriber Acquisition & Retention

- You should have a diverse plan that is ongoing. Regular smaller initiatives are better than less frequent larger sales blitzes. When selling, you need to “ask for the order” many times.
- A vital part of a good subscriber acquisition plan is a thorough retention plan.
- New business is good but there should be an emphasis on former subscribers. Former readers should be contacted on a quarterly basis.
- You should avoid deep discounting. Additional time is better than lowering the billing price. A week or two free, then full pricing, will get the reader in the habit of paying the regular rate. Some locations have had success with “99¢ for the first month.” Premiums can also be effective.
- One way to promote a discount is to compare the delivery rate to your single copy price.
Save 20% off the newsstand price!
- Create a sense of urgency with an expiration date. One and two day sales are effective.
- Telemarketing
 - In-house telemarketing is the most cost efficient and produces better orders.
 - Power hour sessions, the last hour of the day, are effective.
 - If scheduling permits, recruit volunteers from other departments
 - Offer cash incentives for starts
 - Outside telemarketing
 - Should try to negotiate only paid orders, however, there are some firms who work for an hourly rate.
 - Possible outside telemarketing
 - (1) Dawn M. McAnally
SBD Unlimited
Assistant Director
(234) 817-7640
dawnm@summitbd.com
 - (2) Slade Brown
Sr. VP Impact Marketing
(530) 591-3313
Slade@newspapertelemarketing.com
 - Make sure you research and abide by all telemarketing laws
- Carrier sampling
 - Multiple days with follow-up call from the circulation department
 - Cash incentive for carrier with a grand prize (minimum number of orders)
 - Sample down routes when being delivered by office

- New carriers should always sample, while introducing themselves
- Direct mail
 - “We want you back...”, “We Miss You...” to former subscribers
 - Direct mail is effective as an ongoing sales strategy (send 150 a week, to former subscribers)
 - Every Door Direct (EDD) is a low-cost solution for direct mail
 - You will be reaching current subscribers so the message should include information that pertains to them. The convenience of EZ Pay (offering a premium to convert) or the benefits of activating digital access and the newsletter.
- Single copy & SMC inserting
 - Another ongoing, cost-efficient strategy that will supply a steady stream of starts
- Email marketing
 - Geofencing has been effective at some locations.
 - Email blasts can also bring results
 - Contact: Courtney Chojnacki CChojnacki@cnhi.com
 - Form is at <https://www.jotform.com/CNDAdOps/email-marketing-new-order-form>
- Website marketing
 - Most of our websites have unsold slots on their sites; you may be able to do a full front page takeover for a special offer
 - VisionData locations can create custom offer portals for specials like 99 cent introductory months (these should already exist for digital only)
 - Email CNHI Digital Support at help@cnhionline.com to create customer URLs to redirect to VisionData pages for easier hyperlinking (e.g. yourpaper.com/new offer or something similarly short)
 - Use the same ads and URLs to post to social media sites like Facebook
- Kiosk
 - Can have high cost versus low retention, however, some markets do really well

Retention Plan

A good retention plan reaches out to expiring customers 4-5 times before their newspaper is discontinued. Any combination of the following touchpoints will assure a thorough retention plan.

- Invoice
 - It's not uncommon for some newspapers to send multiple invoices. Most readers become accustomed to receiving more than one notice and have a tendency to disregard initial billings. With a good retention plan in place, one bill will suffice. And, there is an expense savings. The average cost to produce and send one bill is 96 cents.
- Email notification
 - Every CNHI newspaper should have a plan in place for acquiring email addresses. Activating digital products and newsletters should be part of that plan.
 - Staff motivation is the key. It must be ingrained in their daily routine, part of every conversation. Occasionally, an active campaign with goals and incentives is effective.
 - Readers must be assured that their information will not be shared and only used as a means of communication between the newspaper and them.
 - CNHI goal is to have email addresses for 80% of subscribers.
 - All email marketing is coordinated through Jenni Fox, CNHI Director of Email Marketing.
 - The cost is \$80 per month.
- TCN call for subscribers due to expire and expired credit cards
 - TCN is an affordable call center used by many newspapers across CNHI.
 - Phone numbers are submitted via a digital file and a personal message can be recorded by phone.
 - The cost is 9 cents for a 30-second minimum. After that, it's 1.7 cents for each 6 seconds or an average of 17 cents per minute.
 - TCN expiration calls should be made from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
 - Contact Andrew Nelson (435-272-0972)
 - **Please check for local ordinances.**
- Notification by carrier
 - The most cost efficient and effective way to notify readers they are due to expire.
 - Any size expiration letter/note can be used. Some newspapers use Post-It notes; many others use simple copier paper.
 - Carrier should affix the notification to the front page.
 - As a cost savings, you can use the carrier to distribute two expiration notices, one on the actual expiration date, the other with the last delivery (after grace).
- "Live" call from someone at the newspaper
 - Ideally, all retention efforts should include two calls from the newspaper. One prior to the subscription stopping and one the day after.

- Since we prefer to talk to someone, these calls may be more effective in the evening hours.
 - If the reader does not answer, it is important that you leave a detailed voice message.
 - Some circulation departments have limited resources; these calls can be made by personnel in other departments. Subscriber retention is one of the most important things we do; a team effort may be required.
- Mailer
 - Not as cost efficient, mailers can be effective. They can be used prior to expiration or as a “We Want You Back” piece within the first 30 days

Easy Pay and sales are important parts of a good retention plan.

- EZ Pay
 - People on automatic renewal are easier to retain and make your retention efforts more manageable.
 - Similar to acquiring email addresses, an ongoing EZ Pay conversion initiative is vital.
- Sales calls
 - Expired customers immediately go to the sales list. For the first three months, “former subscribers” should be contacted monthly. After 90-days, they become a regular part of your sales efforts.

Grace periods can vary widely from location to location. In the past, it was assumed that longer is better. Today, that does not apply.

- Like multiple billing invoices, readers become trained to ignore their expiration date knowing they are going to be extended “X” days.
- There is a delivery expense for grace days. When a customer pays their renewal, make sure you recover the grace period money. Customers who stop after grace add to your expense.
- Grace periods of 14-21 days are acceptable.
- Some newspapers have successfully implemented grace periods of less than 10 days. Readers do adjust and with a good retention plan a long grace period is not necessary.

Discounting and premiums are discouraged during retention efforts. It sets a precedent that is hard to overcome.

Retaining readers is easier than acquiring them. Every effort must be made to “Stop the Stops.” Your *Circulation Team Representative* will be reaching out to discuss the best plan for your location(s). Please share this information with the person who will be leading your retention efforts.

NOTE: If you have any questions or would like assistance setting up a sales or retention plan, please do not hesitate to call.

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