

Newspaper Paid Circulation Training Manual

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This manual is a teaching aid, a starting point, a reference guide and a reminder for Circulation Managers and their District Supervisors, and a 'must have' for educating new hires.

Publishers and newspaper owners will find this manual an indispensable tool to fully understanding the Circulation Department's job description and its responsibilities.

After all, the quickest way to increase a newspaper's bottom line is through the Circulation Department.

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1 – Introduction

This training manual is designed to assist the District Supervisor Team to manage their districts in a highly professional and competent manner. A District Supervisor is, in the true sense of the word, a “professional”.

Circulation is the lifeblood of the newspaper. Without circulation, a newspaper ceases to exist. When a newspaper turns over a block of circulation to a District Supervisor to supervise, it is placing a portion of their only real asset in the District Supervisor hands. Whether this block of circulation is 1,000 or 5,000, it is extremely important. A newspaper can buy new equipment or new vehicles, can construct a new building..., but it is difficult and very expensive to replace lost circulation.

There are basically three main tasks for a District Supervisor.

1. To competently service the circulation currently held in their district.
2. To add to the circulation currently in the district.
3. To collect in full for circulation in their district.

This is perhaps over-simplifying it, but if a District Supervisor can satisfactorily accomplish these tasks, the District Supervisor will be accomplishing his/her overall mandate.

To illustrate the importance of circulation, let us look at what the loss or gain of one subscriber within a district can mean.

For example, if a newspaper has a home-delivered price of \$4.50 per week, and the carrier profit ratio is 25%, the newspaper will receive revenue of \$3.38 for each week the subscriber receives the newspaper. Taking into consideration that subscribers are probably away for 4 weeks in the year, the average subscriber pays for 48 weeks of delivery per year. This represents \$175.76 in revenue for the newspaper.

Lose one subscriber, and your newspaper will lose \$175.76. Lose 100 subscribers, and your newspaper loses \$17,576.00 in revenue over the 48-week period. Reverse this however, and add one subscriber and your newspaper will see an increase in revenue of \$175.76. Add 100 subscribers, and the revenue in your district will increase by \$17,576.00.

Newspaper circulation is somewhat unique. It costs a newspaper absolutely no more in distribution costs (bundling and delivery to carriers) to add a subscriber, but by the same token, the distribution costs are not reduced if a subscriber is lost.

Truly professional District Supervisors can be the master of their own destiny. District Supervisors spend considerable time on their own, and their ability to put this time to their best advantage, will dictate how successful they will be in managing their district. Each section in this training manual is designed to assist District Supervisors in their prime areas of responsibility: service, sales and collections.

This manual touches on all aspects of a District Supervisor’s responsibilities, but not every suggestion will apply to

every District Supervisor. However, we are confident that all District Supervisors will find many of the suggestions and aids truly helpful.

A District Supervisor can make one or two choices. The role of a District Supervisor can be simply a “job” or, it can be part of a career path leading to many opportunities in the exciting business of newspapers.

Above all, a District Supervisor is a professional. Our aim for this manual is to provide you with more tools to help you in your profession.