

# 'Round and Round They Go

## FIVE WAYS TO HALT THE AGENCY REVOLVING DOOR

*in this issue...*

### THE FINE PRINT

*Guarantees and warranties in advertising*

### A DAY IN THE (ADVERTISING) LIFE

*An inside look at an agency owner's day*

### IT'S ALL ABOUT LOCATION

*Geo-fencing and mobile ad targeting*

### LET ME GOOGLE THAT

*The importance of "rogue" research*

*plus...*

What Second Wind's Annual Agency Survey says about agencies

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **'ROUND AND ROUND THEY GO: FIVE WAYS TO HALT THE AGENCY REVOLVING DOOR**

Five ways to retain good employees, including clear expectations, the onboarding process, good managers, rewarding work and competitive compensation.

## **THE FINE PRINT: GUARANTEES AND WARRANTIES IN ADVERTISING**

A refresher course in using guarantees and warranties in advertising, including types of warranties, FTC guidelines, disclaimers and disclosure of warranty terms.

## **WHAT SECOND WIND'S 2015 ANNUAL AGENCY SURVEY REPORT SAYS ABOUT AGENCIES**

Highlights from Second Wind's 2015 Annual Agency Survey Report, including billings, employee benefits, new business trends and more.

## **A DAY IN THE (ADVERTISING) LIFE... DON BECKER, PRESIDENT AT DBA**

Don Becker, owner/president of Wisconsin-based DBA Marketing, gives us the inside scoop on a day in the life of an agency owner.

## **EDITOR'S LETTER**

A note from Second Wind's Content Developer/Editor, Deborah Budd.

*best practices*

## **LET ME GOOGLE THAT**

The importance of conducting a little "rogue" research before meeting with a potential new client.

*futurethink*

## **YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY... IT'S ALL ABOUT LOCATION: GEO-FENCING AND MOBILE AD TARGETING**

Location-based mobile ad targeting, including geo-fencing, is gaining adoption, but still suffers from technological limitations and user ad blocking.



## LIKE A CIRCLE IN A SPIRAL...

It's hard to believe we're already in the second quarter of a busy year. This perpetual motion industry can make your head spin! So take a little time to slow down and read this month's issue of Second Wind Magazine.

This month we look at a different kind of spin—the revolving door through which employees come and go. Employee retention is important as the job market improves and people decide whether they might find better or more exciting opportunities elsewhere. Read on to learn some smart retention strategies.

We also share thoughts on targeted, location-based mobile marketing, or geo-fencing, including some challenges marketers must overcome or at least understand. We all know there are no guarantees in modern marketing—but there are guarantees and warranties on products and services. We cover the nitty gritty in our refresher course on using warranties and guarantees.

Our social marketing expert, Jenny Mikes, shares a story with an insight into new business presentations; and we dig into our most recent Annual Agency Survey Report to share some small agency trends.

Finally, we offer a new feature, “A Day in the Life,” as Second Wind member Don Becker of DBA Marketing Communications, Delafield, WI, takes us through a typical day at his agency. We'll be sharing more stories from members in future issues.

We hope this month's topics set your mind spinning in new directions. Enjoy!

*Deborah Budd, Content Developer/Editor*

**SECOND WIND**  
MAGAZINE

**EXECUTIVE EDITOR** Laurie Mikes  
**CONTENT EDITORS** Deborah M. Budd  
 Beth R. James  
**LAYOUT AND DESIGN** Jennifer Mikes  
**CONTRIBUTORS** Deborah M. Budd  
 Beth R. James  
 Laurie Mikes  
 Jennifer Mikes

1424 Penn Avenue, P.O. Box 6284  
 Wyomissing, PA 19610-0284  
 Phone: (610) 374-9093  
 Fax: (610) 374-9238  
 Email: [info@secondwindonline.com](mailto:info@secondwindonline.com)  
 Website: [www.secondwindonline.com](http://www.secondwindonline.com)

*Second Wind Magazine is a Second Wind members-only publication. Produced and distributed in the USA.*

©2016 Second Wind Ltd.

SECOND WIND MAGAZINE  
*is published quarterly  
 by second wind ltd.*

# 'Round and Round They Go

## FIVE WAYS TO HALT THE AGENCY REVOLVING DOOR

*by Beth James*



**I**t's not easy being an employer today. People are alternately distracted, demotivated, detached and, sometimes, in denial of reality. The daily work of agency managers or principals can sometimes seem like hours of juggling newts and herding cats. It's not easy being an employee either. Managers are alternately dismissive, difficult, demanding, and sometimes delusional.

Of course, it's not that bad every day. But when your agency's bad days overwhelm the good work you do, people begin to eye the door more frequently... and the door begins to revolve.

In the wake of a tiresome day or two, it can be helpful to sit back and consider the "reasons why." So often, communications are at the very heart of employee retention... or turnover; but blaming communications problems is a general catch-all. The types of communication that can cause everyday problems in your agency are very specific, and (fortunately) also very avoidable.

***It Starts at the Very Beginning***

First, to develop and maintain a stable, excellent workforce in your agency, pay close attention to how you communicate expectations. This begins when you first decide to post a job opening. How are you advertising for and presenting the position? Are you painting a clear picture of job responsibilities and expectations? Are you targeting people with the correct skill sets to succeed? There are a number of ways prospective employers can start off on the wrong foot, before the new person even walks into an agency.

Sometimes we describe a position in glowing terms that are nothing like the day-to-day reality of doing a job. We may also oversell the idea of a happy, cohesive workplace when in fact there is friction and conflict; or undersell internal politics, etc. How do agency owners/managers “polish” the job description and interview conversation so it’s attractive, while still being honest and transparent about job realities? The answer: be honest and describe the job as it really is. Assign the duty of writing the ad to a co-worker and manager simultaneously to get the best description.

Some things to avoid: we all see ads for positions that imply great levels of responsibility and autonomy for what are really entry-level jobs. Other ads specify someone with managerial qualifications or aspirations, when there is no clear track to advance. And why is it common to see ads requiring 2, or 3 or 5 years of experience for jobs that a new college grad could do with ease? On the other hand are ads that underplay the level of responsibility in a position. Avoid buzzwords like “fast-paced” (i.e. a sweatshop with no breaks

or vacation time); “self-starter” (no guidance, poor project input, low “teamwork” environment); family-style culture (dysfunction abounds); innovative leadership (the only “good” ideas are the leader’s ideas—your concepts are not worthy).

***Onboarding – The Crucial First Week***

It’s very challenging to get a good picture of a job, or a new employee, until the working relationship actually begins. The first week is a true make-or-break experience. Your bright new person will always remember that first week, so make it memorable in a good way! Make sure they have a good, clean workspace where they can feel “at home.” Make sure they have all of the right tools to get the job done (the same equipment, software, etc. as everyone else).

Likewise, make sure every new person feels welcome and is included in a couple of working groups from the very start. This is a service business, and much of the job involves working closely with others to share ideas, and working closely with clients to market and sell the work. No one is too busy to spend a little time talking with a new person about the agency. And any direct manager should “clear the desk” for a few days to train and familiarize the new person.

***Bad Bosses – The No. 1 Reason People Leave Any Job***

There are many articles and even more research focused on this topic, and most concur: if an employee has to deal with a bad boss, it doesn’t matter whether you offer a fabulous workplace, wonderful pay and benefits, and a solid career track. According to a [recent Gallup poll](#), this is the no. 1 reason people leave their jobs.

You might have hired that bad boss, and you may indeed have great respect for that individual’s work ethic and capability. But if they display any of the behaviors that are the hallmark of the bad boss, better address this immediately in order to stem the potential stampede to the exits.

How do you know if someone is a bad boss, vs. whether the subordinate is a troublemaker or complainer? It’s simple—you just have to connect the dots. Have you had more than one complaint regarding particular behaviors? How many people report to this boss? If two out of three, or three out of five complain, you’ve got a majority issue on your hands. Keep your ear to the ground, and remember that, if you’ve hired professionals, the last thing to show the impact of a bad boss may be the work. The first thing to suffer will be in-office camaraderie and attitude. The next thing may well be a spike in absenteeism.

Help all of your managers to be great bosses. Set a great example. Then provide all of your agency managers with regular management training, information and seminars. Make sure they have time in their busy schedules to actually supervise their people. Finally, make sure your agency managers have input into hiring and training their subordinates... a key part of building the relationship when new people come aboard.

***Is the Work Ultimately Rewarding?***

Millennials are not the only people who seek balance. Everyone wants a great job that offers some new challenges, the chance to succeed, a path to take on added responsibilities when ready, and ultimately, interesting work. Taking clients and jobs that offer dull, unrewarding, and uninteresting

work may make your people want to leave. Add a healthy amount of stress, and you up the stakes. Call me an idealist, but I truly believe that hard work and stress need to be balanced by the intrinsic rewards of the work.

Some questions to ask your people—bosses and employees alike: Are they proud of the work? Do they feel the agency’s work in general showcases their best abilities? Are they happy with the client mix? What other types of clients (categories or products) would they like to work for? Does the work (and the client base) align with their personal values... and the agency’s brand values?

Hold regular roundtable sessions with your people to make sure your work is tracking with where you all want to go as an agency.

Employee buy-in in terms of the work is very important, and often overlooked. Agencies are better at engaging employees than many industries, but we (like many smaller employers) often fail to extend training and build new responsibilities into existing positions.

Many millennials (and I’d venture to guess anyone who’s under 50 and mobile) will consider moving on to another job when they discern that there is no upward mobility. Millennials, as the new kids, place a high value on the ability to [develop leadership skills](#).

**Compensation Matters**

No one goes to work in an agency because they want to “get rich quick.” Well, okay, maybe a few people. But most creative people seek creative work because this is part of who they are... creating

images, words, music, photography, film, digital artwork. And your account-side people should be very similar, able to create enthusiasm for the work among your clients. Better-than-adequate compensation is needed to keep your great creative people on board. Pay attention to the job market in your region, and the pay levels of similar jobs. Benchmark regularly, and set your agency pay a little higher than the average going rate.



Consider a financial “open door” policy, enabling your people to discuss their salary with you, and their managers. Everyone worries about this issue, and it so often adds negative overtones to a relatively happy workplace. Your people—especially if they are being paid under industry standard—are bound to compare notes. You can head off any issues by opening up the dialog and letting everyone know where they are on their job-salary scale. If you have people who routinely over-perform, reward them with a higher level of profit sharing

or bonus compensation, so that your normal salary curve is not skewed. Then use this as a carrot to incent others to higher performance levels. Don’t become annoyed when people question their compensation; be proactive and discuss this with them regularly so that you are on the same page.

You want the best people to enter your agency and stay, not spin away to your competitors. Keep these five retention strategies in mind, and manage them carefully to keep your agency door from revolving. ●

the  
FINE  
PRINT

---

*guarantees and  
warranties in  
advertising*

---

*by Deborah Budd*



We see them every evening on cable TV—infomercials or long-form ads that shout about how great their products are and then claim, “you’ll love our product—or we’ll completely refund the price of purchase!”

That’s called a guarantee. And many advertisers get into difficulties by offering guarantees without understanding Federal Trade Commission (FTC) requirements regarding advertised guarantees or warranties. So here is a refresher course.

### **Full Disclosure**

Marilyn Colannino, Director of Rights and Clearances at the law firm ReedSmith, writes that when advertisers include a guarantee or warranty in an ad, they must also provide to the media’s Broadcast Standards & Practices a complete, written copy of the warranty or guarantee. Equally important, advertisers must also disclose the warranty in the ad itself. These disclosures are found in the advertising “fine print”—footnotes explaining precisely what is covered by the guarantee or warranty heralded in the ad; or when it won’t apply, in teeny tiny “mouse-type” that even 20-20 eyeballs need a magnifying glass to read. In broadcast advertising, these details are spouted at lightning speed at the end of the ad by some anonymous voiceover announcer. Online, there are those ubiquitous “I have read and agreed to the terms and conditions”-style links that pretty much everyone clicks without reading, or links tagged on to the end of a product specification that customers seldom follow or download. By law, whether or not customers read these disclosures, advertisers must provide them in full.

If the full details of a guarantee or warranty can’t be included in the ad due to space or time restrictions, you must clearly direct the user/buyer how to obtain or view the full wording. Offering the full warranty for review gives advertisers some protection from customers who are unhappy with a product. However, the main goal of disclosure is defining the terms under which the guarantee or warranty will be honored.

### **Need to Know**

TruthInAdvertising.org states that the FTC uses a [4-pronged test](#) to determine whether the fine print in an ad covers what consumers need to know about a warranty or guarantee:

**Prominence:** is the fine print big enough for people to notice and read?

**Presentation:** is the wording and format easy for people to understand?

**Placement:** is the fine print where people will look?

**Proximity:** is the fine print near the claim it qualifies?

If consumer complaints cause the FTC to examine your clients’ ads, and the disclosures fail to meet these tests, your clients could face substantial fines.

### **Types of Guarantees/Warranties**

[Under the Magnuson-Moss Warranty Act of 1975](#), no business is required to offer a warranty on products or services. But if they do offer a warranty, they must comply with the Act. The Act only covers written (not oral) warranties; does

not apply to warranties on service (except where a warranty covers parts used for repairs and the work of the installer); and covers only consumer products, not products for commercial purposes.

**Implied warranties.** Some warranties are deemed to not need explanation; they are inherently implied by the type of product or service offered. For instance, if a customer purchases a new oven, it is reasonable to assume the oven will perform the expected function of baking, broiling and heating. If it does not perform this function or performs it poorly, the implied warranty is in breach, and the FTC expects the manufacturer to speedily provide a remedy—in this case, probably an oven that works.

Another implied warranty is the product’s fitness for a particular use or purpose. If a manufacturer states a product will meet certain customer requirements, i.e., a washer will handle 15-pound loads, and then the customer finds it really doesn’t perform well with more than a 10-pound load, the implied warranty is again in breach and must be remedied.

Generally, in the US, state statutes for the duration of implied warranties cover four years from the date of purchase. This does not mean the product has to last for four years. It means the product must be of “normal durability” based on its price range and typical durability within its category. Essentially, consumers have four years to discover a flaw that existed at the time the product was purchased. Implied warranties may not cover problems caused by consumer abuse, misuse, ordinary wear and tear, failure to follow directions or improper maintenance.

Manufacturers wishing to disclaim implied warranties (i.e., they assume no responsibility for the product after purchase) must clearly disclose a product is “as is,” with no recourse for the consumer should they purchase it and then discover problems, except as might be covered under product liability laws; e.g., if a product proves defective or dangerous.

Several states do not allow sellers to avoid implied warranties, so check your state laws if clients want to move products without implied warranties. Also, if a written warranty or service contract is offered, companies may not disclaim implied warranties under federal law. Read more at the [FTC’s Federal Warranty Law page](#).

### *Full vs. Limited Warranties.*

It’s easy to determine if your warranty is “full” or “limited.” If any of the following statements about your warranty are not true, your warranty is limited.

- You do not limit the duration of implied warranties.
- You provide warranty service to anyone who owns the product during the warranty period; that is, you do not limit coverage to first purchasers.
- You provide warranty service free of charge, including costs for returning the product or removing and reinstalling the product when necessary.
- You provide, at the consumer’s choice, a replacement or full refund if, after a reasonable number of tries, you are unable to repair the product.

- You do not require consumers to perform any duty as a precondition for receiving service, except notifying you that service is needed, unless you can demonstrate that the duty is reasonable.

Some companies offer multiple warranties, or a combination of full and limited warranties on parts of a product, or the duration of coverage for some parts. You see this style of warranty frequently on automobiles, where certain parts have substantially different warranties than others.

**Satisfaction Guaranteed.** You’re confident that the product is a winner... so confident, you think it’s a great idea to offer guaranteed satisfaction. But remember the phrase that usually accompanies that guarantee: “or your money back.” That’s payment refunded in full if the customer is not “satisfied.” FTC guidelines on warranties and guarantees require full refund with such a guarantee. Most companies apply requirements, specifically that the product or its unused portion be returned in exchange for the full refund, and that the request for refund happen within a set time, e.g., “return the unused portion within 30 days.” Some even require the product be enclosed in the original packaging. All of these conditions must be plainly spelled out in ads, marketing materials and on the packaging.

**Lifetime Warranties.** Is that your lifetime? Mine? No, it is the lifetime of the product, which the seller is expected to define in its warranty or guarantee. For example, an auto part may be guaranteed for “as long as the car runs,” or the seller may want to only guarantee it for “as long as the purchaser owns the car on which the part was installed.” Again, how the seller defines “lifetime” must be clearly disclosed in ad and sales materials.

Some additional considerations with regard to warranties relate to “tie-in” provisions, where a company claims a product must only be used with another of its products (say, a specific Brand A sweeper filter with their Brand A vacuum cleaner) or the warranty is voided. Magnuson-Moss allows some flexibility in disclaimers; read the Act for clarification.

Regardless of where or how a product is purchased—online, through a catalog or directly at retail—sellers must make a full copy of the warranty available to customers, or explain how they can request a copy. And, sellers must promptly and completely comply if purchasers request a refund. Review the [FTC guidelines for guarantees and warranties](#).

By offering a guarantee or warranty, you elevate consumers’ trust in a product or service. Make sure clients can deliver on their warranties, or that trust will erode and quickly create problems for your clients, and possibly for your agency. ●

### *What Information Is Required in a Warranty?*

**Scope of coverage** – what is or is not covered.

**Duration of coverage.**

**Remedy** – what you will (and will not) do to correct a problem or defect.

**How customers can get warranty service**

**Customer rights under state laws** – a boiler-plate statement included in every product warranty: *This warranty gives you specific legal rights, and you may also have other rights which vary from state to state.*

*what second wind's*  
**ANNUAL AGENCY  
 SURVEY REPORT**  
*says about agencies*



FINANCIALS

PAYROLL &  
EMPLOYEE BENEFITSACCOUNTING/  
OPERATIONSTECHNOLOGY/  
SOFTWAREPLANNING/  
NEW BUSINESSDIGITAL  
SERVICESAGENCY PRINCIPAL  
INFORMATIONSALARIES &  
HOURLY RATES

Every year, Second Wind collects data from our member agencies and publishes the results. This provides members with a “barometer” for how smaller agencies are faring, where financial and operational adjustments are being made, and whether there are notable trends in hourly rates and salaries. We noted some points in our *2015 Annual Agency Survey Report* that we’d like to highlight.

### ***The Agency Business Looks Good***

The recovery from the Great Recession was a long time coming, but data indicates agencies have adjusted as needed or returned from the downturn in good shape. Average billings were up, predominantly due to increasing online and traditional media billings. Agency margins increased for online media, account service and account planning. Total Billings, Total AGI and Capitalized Billings all increased, as did Net Income. Other indicators that business looks good: 48 percent of survey respondents increased staff, and 59 percent planned to hire in the coming year; 79 percent of agencies are hiring to service new accounts.

### ***Payroll and Employee Retention***

Total operating expenses decreased slightly, including payroll expense; be careful about cutting payroll too much. Too few people for the workload can lead to burnout or employee loss. Examine your retention strategies, and try to keep salaries and benefits competitive. A step in the right direction: employee bonuses increased to balance with tighter salary management.

Agency owners have compensated for reduced payroll by being more generous with vacation and personal days, but extras can sweeten the deal for employees: agencies offering dental/vision insurance (84%), training reimbursement (87%), 401(k)s (92%), and leaves of absence (83%) have all increased by about 10% since five years ago. If wages are compressed and other rewards become more tightly managed, retention could become an issue among security-minded Millennials, so try to balance competitive wages with strong benefit offerings.

### **Healthcare Costs... What Can We Say?**

A major trouble area is ever-increasing health benefits expenses. Overall average health insurance expense jumped from \$71,119 to \$89,307 between 2014 and 2015. Just 27 percent of agencies now cover 100 percent of employee health insurance; 65 percent now pay no coverage for dependents; most agencies require employees to pay a portion toward their own health coverage. In a growing trend, many small businesses are ceasing to offer health care benefits, as individual policies through the Affordable Care Act are proving more affordable (anywhere from 20 to 60 percent less than group plans), and may even offer better coverage than most agencies are able to buy. Instead of buying the policy and deducting from employee payroll, businesses are beginning to offer defined contribution plans that reimburse employees for buying individual coverage.

As thorny as health care benefits are for smaller agencies, the health care category is now the number one area of agency expertise, with 47 percent of agencies now listing this category as their top area of expertise.

### **Money, Money, Money...**

Agency hourly rates remained stable, but we noted a decrease in the average blended hourly rate (offered by 68 percent of agencies). Check your rate calculations to ensure blended rates allow you room to make a profit. For that matter, recheck all hourly rates; as clients tighten up on budgets, agencies need to ensure their estimates ensure that agencies can still make a reasonable profit.

Agency of Record relationships have shrunk since 2010; 81 percent of agencies have AoR clients, but just 43 percent of clients at those agencies are AoR; more than half of agency clients were AoR in 2010. This percentage dropped in 2013 and has not come back up. That aligns with other industry data we've seen that smaller agencies are increasingly working project by project rather than on retainer or in agency of record arrangements.

We've already written about a [disturbing trend in collection times](#)—51 percent of agencies are now waiting 45 days for client payment of agency invoices. A terrifying 18 percent wait as long as 60 days! Tighten up collection strategies and start getting tougher about client payment. Also, pursue new clients with good financial outlooks and credit ratings ([See Who Says a Prospect Is a Prospect?](#)). As our late founder, Tony Mikes, always said, "Never be your clients' bank."

### **New Business Aces!**

While agencies are pitching for fewer new business opportunities (an average of 13 pitches a year), the close rate has improved, with agencies averaging 8 wins for those 13 pitches. New business remains a factor in increasing annual AGI, with 59 percent attributing AGI increases primarily

to new business from current clients. Keep those relationships strong, and look for new opportunities within client organizations. Also, develop a new business plan for the year and work the plan; 72 percent of agencies have a proactive new business plan, so some of our members need to step up their efforts in this area to ensure a steady flow of new work. New business is critical to ongoing stability and growth.

### **Digital Remains a Stumbling Block**

Agencies continue to wrestle with serving digital expertise. While 49 percent are very confident in their digital skills, 48 percent are only somewhat confident. Be aware that RSW/US recently reported that clients are dissatisfied with agencies claiming digital expertise that they then prove not to have. Keep working on improving digital knowledge and techniques. Partner if necessary to ensure strong digital services. Clients are increasingly moving to mobile and digital marketing, and expect agencies to bring related skill sets to the table.

As you progress through the year, keep close tabs on how your agency is doing in key financial and operational areas. By monitoring progress throughout the year, you can adjust and adapt to keep the agency on a sound footing, and keep pushing toward short- and long-term goals. Overall, the smaller agency business looks pretty sound. Avoid complacency; work hard during the good times so if (when) bad times roll around again, your agency will be in a position to weather the storm. ●

THINK.  
SHARE.  
CREATE.  
AS.

THINK.  
SHARE.  
CREATE.

# A DAY IN THE (ADVERTISING) LIFE

*Don Becker • President at DBA Communications*

*How does your workday compare with those of other Second Wind members? Beginning in this issue, we offer glimpses into the daily lives of your peers in the advertising and marketing business. This month, Don Becker, president at DBA Marketing Communications, Delafield, Wisconsin, shares an average day with our readers.*



CREATE.

**6:00 am:** Wake up. Look at clock. Think about work. Go back to sleep.

**7:00 am:** Wake up again. Actually get out of bed. Drink coffee (nothing comes before coffee).

**7:10 am:** Check emails. Send some project work to creative team who arrive at work by 7:30 am.

**8:30 am:** Walk in door to DBA. Walk to office and sit down.

**8:31 am:** Creative director and account supervisor enter office to ask questions, get direction on a couple of jobs.

**8:32 am:** More coffee.

**9:00 am:** High school student arrives for shadowing day to see what it is like to work at an agency. I tell him “it’s all about the coffee.”

**9:15 am:** Daily 5-10 minute HOT project preview meeting with staff. As usual, it takes 45 minutes.

**9:45 am:** During the meeting, a client’s printer calls asking us to resend “urgent” files... because they never got around to downloading them last week (which was their deadline, by the way).

**10:00 am:** Still in the morning meeting. Graphics installer arrives to confirm specs for internal branding project. I ask our creative director to meet with him while we wrap our meeting.

**10:25 am:** Daily 5-10 minute meeting ends.

**10:30 am:** Send high school student to shadow our senior designer and learn about all the stuff they do. Respond to several emails and start

working on an estimate I was supposed to send to the client yesterday.

**11:01 am:** High school student returns. I ask if he has any questions. None are forthcoming. I wish him well and send him on his way.

**11:02 am:** Make more edits to a client Powerpoint presentation. The same client visited our agency yesterday, expressing concern that we were not hitting the mark. After a grueling two-hour editing session, he said we were “doing better.” When I pressed him as to where we were still missing the mark, he confessed he didn’t know... because he wasn’t sure what his boss was really looking for.

**Noon:** Lunch. Working just 4 miles from home, I can cruise back to walk the dog for a bit. (I’m a Fitbit junkie... gotta win those Workweek Hustles). Grab a bite, then head back to the office.

**1:30 pm:** I’m the boss, so I get a 90-minute lunch. Meet with the AE and creative director to concept two different post-show emails for a client (I’m really an account guy but also do 90% of our copywriting). Two shows, three concepts each. Make them clever, but not funny. One photo. Simple headline. Bullet points. Logo should be bigger. Don’t refer to the city the expo was held in, don’t refer to food (even though it was a food event) and don’t show anything but product. We bang out about 30 or 40 ideas in a half hour, then pick six to execute.

**2:00 pm:** Sit down to create the estimate that I was going to do yesterday and stare at specs. Bored. Push it aside (I think I did that yesterday, too) and read copy for revised client brochure.

**2:30 pm:** Visit with our Millennial senior designer. She’s been on board for about 9 months. I love Millennials—two of them in the design department (LOL. Sounds like I collect them). Maybe it’s because they’re both on the design side, but I’m amazed at how they can wander through a day talking about cats, sitting in their chairs cross-legged (ouch) and thumbing through their iPhones—yet get everything done well, so what do I care how they get there? Love ’em.

**3:00 pm:** Sign up for local marketing association event being held tomorrow night. More new, young faces every year... fewer old, familiar faces. Still networking!

**3:30 pm:** Meet with creative team and send draft of infographic to client who is out of town until Thursday morning. She needs the graphic for a Thursday afternoon presentation...

**3:45 pm:** High school student’s Mom emails to say thanks for hosting him. She relates that he said visit was “good.”

**4:00 pm:** Field miscellaneous questions from staff. Check in on their day.

**5:10 pm:** Organize piles of work on desk and extra table in my office. Review whiteboard to make sure I hit all the key tactics for the day. Prep board for tomorrow. Go home. Think about work...



let me  
GOOGLE  
that

By Jennifer Mikes

When I was fresh out of college, I did something that haunts me to this day. Before you make assumptions, let me just stop you and say, no, I did not get arrested. During my first year of study for a History MA, I applied for a job as a research assistant. To my surprise, I was called to interview with a professor who was writing a book on the American Founders. The job involved long days at the library fact-checking and researching, but I was okay with that; this was one of the things I enjoyed most about being a History major. I gleefully went to the interview, told the gentleman about my undergraduate degree and why I enjoyed American History. I politely asked him about himself, how long he had been at the university... all the pleasantries one engages in with an interviewer. When the interview was over, I got up, handed the gentleman a writing sample of mine, told him it was nice meeting him and left the room.

That night my dinner companion said to me, “Do you realize who you just met with?” I naively said no. He proceeded to tell me that the professor I interviewed with was a noted expert in US Colonial and Revolutionary-era history... in addition to being a two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning author; a Jefferson Lecturer in 1998; and recipient of the National Humanities Medal in 2010. If you’d like to know who the professor was, I think you know what I’m about to say... Google it. I buried my head in my hands, embarrassed that I went through the entire interview not knowing a single thing about the man sitting before me except his name. Needless to say, I did not get the job.

Okay, so I was probably never going to make in onto a list of this professor’s notable students. But the experience did teach me a valuable lesson: *never, ever, go into a meeting where you don’t know a thing about the person you’re meeting with.* This is golden advice for any agency pitching a prospect as well.

### ***Spend some quality time (online) together...***

My interview took place before the days when a quick search would return a person's life history. In fact, a brief Wikipedia search today taught me everything I would have needed to know to impress the professor and get the job. Today we have access to just about anything we need to know thanks to the webiverse. That means when you score a meeting with a prospect, you should immediately set aside some quality time with Google. Get to know your prospect, consume their website, learn who they are and what they do. Become one with the prospect.

### ***Get stalker-esque***

Follow your prospect on their social media accounts. What is the expression—"the eyes are the window to the soul"? Well social media is undoubtedly the window to a potential new client. See who they follow, what they retweet, share or like. Reach out to them with links and shares that fit their interests and seek interactions with them. Comment on their posts and try to become part of their network. Also, forge connections with the prospect's connections. Does this seem a little intrusive to you? Maybe a little weird or stalker-ish? Truthfully, it kind of is... but the bottom line is, if they don't want their info out there, then it wouldn't be there. People curate their own images and content. If you are not comfortable sifting through social media then have someone younger do it. I can guarantee you they will be comfortable with it.

### ***Ask Around***

Use your connections to find common ground—especially, people you have in common. Ask your

business associates what they know about the prospect. Try to gain insights into what makes them tick, their chief concerns, and their "triggers." If you find a good connection, ask them for a referral or introduction. Look for events, community activities and business associations where you might informally meet the prospect.

### ***Survey Says***

Nothing grabs a prospect faster than bringing them insights into their customers. Check social media to see what customers are saying about the company and its products. Use those comments to build and distribute an online customer survey (tools such as Survey Monkey make it ridiculously easy to achieve something like this). Or, do man-on-the-street or in-store polls to glean feedback on products and services. Package what you learn and share part of it with the prospect to get a first meeting. Keep digging for more insights.

### ***Go Traditional***

If searching online is getting you some good information but not first meeting quality information, you can always go with the more tried and true research methods. Dig into the company, its products, people, brands, competition and industry. You can do this with traditional secondary research. Call Melissa or Laurie at Second Wind to learn about market research options, competitive data, media reports, and a host of other reports that can help you get smart, fast. While you're waiting for your research, track online news about the company, category and industry. Read the industry trade websites, and attend some industry

trade shows. Call the prospect's channel (distributors, retailers, salespeople) and ask them about the product, sales process, customer service, etc. I call this "boots on the ground" (a.k.a., guerrilla research).

Knowledge is power, especially in the game of winning a first meeting with a prospect. Power up the search button and you'll never be haunted by the research you neglected to do. ●

*you know what they say...*

*it's all about*  
**LOCATION**

---

**GEO-FENCING AND MOBILE AD TARGETING**

---

*By Laurie Mikes*

**A**s the purchaser of several homes during my lifetime, I have always ascribed to the theory that location is the most important aspect of a property. You can change anything else about a home—paint, landscaping, fixtures, facades—but few people go to the trouble of moving a home to a new location. Yes, it's been done, but only the rare individual will go to such lengths.

What's true in real estate is also true in advertising: location matters. This is not a novel concept to advertisers and their agencies. Since the dawn of advertising, media buyers have considered location as part of their strategy. If potential customers, particularly the right customers, can't see, hear or read your ad, you might as well not bother.

What's exciting today is that instead of waiting for your target to see your ad at a specific location, you can reach them at their location, with pinpoint accuracy. Again, this is not a new strategy, but the level of accuracy in targeting today is striking.

#### ***Geo-Fencing Delivers***

New technologies like geo-targeting, geo-fencing and beaconing are key tools for businesses promoting their products and services based on a customer's physical location, past purchasing habits, interests and potential needs. Geo-fencing, in particular, has been garnering high adoption rates by advertisers, showing promise in delivering clicks and conversions that put your average web-based banner ad to shame. Vouchercloud, a geo-fencing platform delivering coupons and offers to people within 200 meters of a participating store, reports click-through rates of up to 45 percent.

By definition, geo-fencing is a location-based mobile technology that lets you specify a precise, geographic area for a specific mobile use or application. In terms of marketing, this virtual "fence" allows you to target people, via their mobile devices, within that defined area. Once you set up parameters for your geo-fence, consumers are targeted based on the GPS of their smartphone or other mobile device.

Geo-fences can also be dynamic, changing, growing, or shrinking based on pre-determined criteria. For instance, if you're using mobile advertising to attract people to your retail-clothing store, you may want a wider geo-fence during slow times, such as weekdays, and a narrower geo-fence during the busier weekends. This offers control over the ads to ensure your advertising reaches consumers effectively at any given time.

## ***Where is Geo-fencing Useful?***

Opportunities for geo-fencing are limited only by the advertiser's imagination; many companies are thinking outside the box when pushing offers and information to consumers. Popular uses of geo-fencing include:

- Showing ads to consumers when they are physically near your business, increasing the chance that they may “drop in”
- Targeting new consumers by sending them special offers or coupons when they are near your business
- Targeting consumers visiting related businesses in your area; for instance, targeting the area around a nearby salon and sending coupons from a local drugstore for a special sale on beauty products
- Sending your daily specials at lunchtime to consumers/business people in your area
- Targeting consumers near a competitor's location and making them an offer to come to your location

## ***Some Caveats...***

As with all media, geo-fencing has good points and challenges. Nordstrom found this out the hard way in 2013 when they used in-store geo-location to track customers and cue staff to “magically” appear when someone needed assistance or information about merchandise. Nordstrom customers were creeped-out, feeling as if they had been stalked.

With that in mind, it's important to note a few drawbacks to geo-fencing:

- To see a geo-fencing ad, consumers must be on their phone within the geo-fencing area. If the phone is in their pocket or purse, the ad may be missed. By the time they reach for their phone, they may be out of the advertiser's immediate service area.
- Additionally, users must be within a mobile app or browsing the web for the ad to reach them. If a consumer is on the phone or merely texting, the ad will be missed.
- Beware of the stalker effect. If you go overboard with your geo-fencing ads and communications, consumers may feel as if Big Brother is watching their every move.
- If consumers turn-off their phones' geo-location service, ads will not be able to pinpoint their locations—so nothing will be delivered. As more marketers use geo-fencing, there is a risk that more and more consumers may turn off geo-location services or only use them selectively.

- Geo-fencing works well when consumers are walking or sitting and have the opportunity to look at their phones. It is not effective if consumers are in a car or on public transportation as the opportunity to divert their route to a specific store is limited.

What does the future hold for geo-fencing? It's difficult to know for sure, but according to Pew Research, nearly two-thirds of Americans own a smart phone, and individuals look at these devices more than 200 times per day, on average. This offers a lot of opportunity for advertisers to make an impression. And, as national advertisers like Pizza Hut and Starbucks use geo-fencing to reach consumers literally on the doorstep, smaller advertisers are bound to follow suit. The targeted nature of geo-fencing makes it very appealing to advertisers looking to get the most out of every ad dollar. ●