

CHICAGO

ANNUAL CONFERENCE





THURS, NOVEMBER 5

8-10:00AM

Board of Directors Meeting

Registration Opens

11:15AM

Opening Remarks, the PMA Board of Directors

11:30AM-12PM

[SALES]

Whiteboard Brainstorm

A roundtable discussion on what's working, what's challenging and where you see sales success in 2027. **Moderated by** *Jeni Mann of Mid-Atlantic Media and Rose Caudillo of PDX Parent*

[EDITORIAL]

Group Therapy

A brainstorming session for what's working, what's not working and what's on your mind. **Moderated by** *Amy Foreman of Family Resource Group*

12-1PM

Welcome Back Lunch

1-2PM

[GROUP]

Driving Revenue and Readership through Branded Content

In this dynamic session, Shannon Kinney who leads The Branded Content Project for Local Media Association and Local Media Consortium (brandedcontentproject.com), you'll learn why you should consider Branded Content to fuel revenue and readership at your publication. We will also share findings and statistics from our nationwide survey of advertisers in 2025 on revenue potential, current spending, and the dozen categories to target that are spending more than \$1Billion per year in the category. You'll see best practices from peers, get a step by step on how to implement how to position it on your site, your magazine, social channels, and e-newsletters to maximize results for your clients, and tips on how to sell this exciting offering. **Speaker:** *Shannon Kinney, Dream Local*

2-2:15PM

Refreshment Break/Network with Exhibitors

2:15-3:15PM

[SALES]

From Efficiency to Dominance: Advanced AI Tactics for Modern Sales

Many media sales professionals are already using AI – but they're using it the same way everyone else is. This session goes beyond surface-level prompts and basic automation to show how top-performing reps and teams are leveraging AI as a strategic sales advantage, not a productivity hack. You'll learn how to use AI to see deals earlier than competitors, personalize outreach at scale without sounding robotic, run better discovery, anticipate objections, and

shape deals before buyers do, create a sales advantage with AI as your thinking partner, and see post-call intelligence (what you missed by AI did not)! This is a 201-level session designed for users who already understand the basics and want to turn AI into a real competitive edge — not just another tool in the stack.

Speaker: Shannon Kinney, Dream Local

2:15-2:45PM

[EDITORIAL]

Leaning Into Schools, Hospitals, Wellness Partnerships

A roundtable discussion on growing partnerships and covering education, health and wellness. **Moderated by** Elena Epstein, L.A. Parent

2:45-3:15PM

[EDITORIAL]

Roundtable: Fresh Spins

A roundtable discussion on how to add a "fresh spin" on longstanding topics like "screen time," "teen mental health," "maternal mental load," etc. **Moderated by** Amy Foreman, Family Resource Group

3:15-3:30PM

Refreshment Break/Network with Exhibitors

3:30-4PM

AI in Action: Local Publisher Case Study

Hear how Midwest Parenting has harnessed the power of AI to streamline everything, including:

Newsletters: Turning article and event links into formatted newsletters, with saved instructions for each publication's style and voice.

Article writing and updating: Using AI to help write high-quality articles in our house style that sound natural and like us.

Publisher Reports: A reporting site that brings website and Facebook stats together and makes it easier to pull advertiser reports.

Pagination + Email and admin to streamline daily tasks

Facebook analysis and post ideas: Looking at post performance to figure out what's working, then using that to help with topics, headlines and wording for future posts.

Speaker: Wendy Hasser of Midwest Parenting

4-4:45PM

[SALES]

Marketing and Media Kits

A roundtable discussion on how to position products, media kits and marketing materials so the pitch does not overwhelm clients. Please bring printed copies of marketing collateral, media kits, promos, etc. to share with the group. **Moderated by** Jasmin Thankachen, Seattle's Child and Laura Powell, Atlanta Parent

[EDITORIAL]

Hyperlocal Content

Hear case studies on how PMA members are moving away from the kind of content that AI is covering everywhere across the Internet, to a more localized plan to drive engagement and why it matters to show up at local community events. **Speaker:** David Arkin, David Arking Consulting

5-6PM

Opening Reception



FRI, NOVEMBER 6

8-9:00AM

Group Breakfast

9-10AM

[GROUP]

Best Ideas

Submit your best ideas for revenue, editorial, branded content, social media, events and audience development from the last year and leave this session with a takeaway to bring home to your team!

Moderated by **Steff Liston-Holtrop**, *Hood Magazine*

10-10:15AM

Refreshment Break/Network with Exhibitors

10:15-11AM

[SALES]

Leading High Performance Sales Teams

In this session, veteran media executive Eric Mayberry, formerly of Lee Enterprises, will share practical leadership strategies for building and sustaining high-performing sales teams. From communication plans that clearly define messaging and expectations to the authentic conversations that shape strong sales cultures, Mayberry will outline approaches leaders can implement immediately. Attendees will gain practical insights they can apply right away to improve performance, strengthen communication and accountability, and change the culture within their sales organizations. **Speakers:** *Eric Mayberry, Smart Tech Digital Agency*

[EDITORIAL]

Newsletter Trends to Watch

How publishers are using newsletters to increase engagement, reactivate subscribers, grow first-party audiences and generate revenue through sponsorships, contests and premium offerings.

Speaker: *David Arkin, David Arking Consulting*

11-11:15AM

Refreshment Break/Network with Exhibitors

11:15AM-12PM

[SALES]

The Foolproof Sales Equation

From one of the greatest sales trainers in media, this method helps your sales reps: 1) Uncover critical information in the needs conversation; 2) Build credibility in the sales process; and 3) Guarantee they get the sale 80% of the time — or identify specifically why they didn't. **Speaker:** *Eric Mayberry, Smart Tech Digital Agency*

[EDITORIAL]

Rethinking Your Editorial Calendar

How to rethink your editorial calendar to help drive your digital products. **Speaker:** *David Arkin, David Arking Consulting*

12-1:00PM

Group Lunch

1-2PM

[GROUP]

Beyond the Blank Page: How AI Makes Media Companies More Valuable (Not Less)

The flood of low-quality AI content is actually making credible, trusted publications MORE valuable, not less. The opportunity isn't to compete with the robots, it's to use AI to do the boring stuff faster so your teams can focus on what humans do best: build trust, tell real stories, and serve your communities.

Speaker: Scott McIntosh, Digital Treehouse

2-2:15PM

Break

3:15-4PM

How to Vibe Code for Visionary Leaders and Publishers in 30 Minutes

Vibe coding isn't for the nerds anymore. Every leader who intends to have a strategic advantage in 2026 and beyond should understand this radically empowering skill set, which removes many of the time, capital, and staffing barriers that previously prevented them from executing on their ideal vision. An entire category of previously untouchable "high impact, high effort" moves is becoming high impact and low effort. Vibe coding can help leaders see and realize visions for their companies that would previously have been too costly or time-consuming to even consider in strategic planning. In this session, Kenny Katzgrau will show how the same tools Silicon Valley innovators are using are now available to leaders and their teams, and demonstrate how to use them live. *Speaker: Kenny Katzgrau, Broadstreet*

2:15-2:45PM

[GROUP]

Running Successful Contests

Find out how to make the most of your Parents' Choice and/or Best Of ballot as well as photo contest ideas with strategies for increasing revenue on the ballot, in the issue, at your event, via email and more! *Speaker: Lauren Hurlock of City Spark*

[SMALL
PUBLISHERS
GROUP]

Meet Up

Small publishers group meet up to discuss what's working, what's not working and what's next. *Moderated by Jane MacNealy of Southwest Florida Family and Andrea Breznay, Monterey Bay Parent*

3:15-4PM

[GROUP]

The Editorial-Sales Dance

A group discussion on how editorial and sales departments interact, cooperate and ideate. Are they meeting regularly? Do sales teams read the stories, follow and engage with social? Does editorial understand the sales landscape? *Moderated by Ron Epstein, L.A. Parent and Jim Schneider, Island Parent*

6-6:30PM

Awards Cocktail Reception

6:30-9PM

Awards Banquet and Presentation



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