

NewsBeat

Published by the New York Press Association
on behalf of New York's Community Newspapers

February 2016

NYFA

Spring Convention 2016 April 8TH and 9TH

- *64 Workshops*
- *450 Better Newspaper Contest Awards*
- *25 Trade Show Vendors*
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Thursday, April 7, 2016

NYPA/NYPS Boards of Directors Meetings
NYPA Foundation Board of Directors Meeting
Gideon Putnam Hotel, Saratoga Springs, NY

Friday & Saturday, April 8 & 9, 2016

NYPA Spring Convention and Tradeshow
Gideon Putnam Hotel, Saratoga Springs, NY

Friday, June 10, 2016

NYPA/NYPS Board of Directors Meetings
NYPA Foundation Board of Directors Meeting
Straus News, 333 Seventh Ave. (6th flr.), NYC



Thursday, September 15, 2016

NYPA/NYPS Boards of Directors Meetings
NYPA Foundation Board of Directors Meeting
Omni Parker House
60 School Street, Boston, MA

Friday & Saturday, September 16 & 17, 2016

NYPA Fall Convention
Omni Parker House
60 School Street, Boston, MA

Friday, November 11, 2016

NYPA/NYPS Board of Directors Meetings
NYPA Foundation Board of Directors Meeting
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NYPA

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Friday & Saturday, April 8th and 9th

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A NEWSLETTER FOR NEW YORK'S COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS
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NYPAOK Convention and Trade Show

Highlights for Publishers:

- Conducting effective performance reviews
- Structuring compensation packages to achieve company goals
- Building capacity and raising leadership performance
- Developing and executing compelling and practical strategic plans
- High impact marketing strategies and communication programs
- Powerful Project Management: taking ownership, setting expectations, keeping projects on track
- Video — where it is going and how to monetize it
- Circulation/audience development — growth strategies, in-store programs, easy-pay, sampling programs, promotion & marketing, best practices

Highlights for Editors & Reporters:

- Engaging younger audiences
- How to really (and substantially) talk to your audience
- When a staff isn't staff — managing freelancers
- Drones?
- Getting it right — making content decisions when covering tragedy
- Making data actionable
- Reaching digitally savvy millennials
- How community newspapers cover national stories while competing with major media outlets
- Using public data for reporting
- Using smartphones to create smarter video news packages
- Photography for reporters
- Using alternative story formats: The How and Why
- Investigative reporting and enterprise stories
- FOIL
- Libel
- Fact checking
- Data driven storytelling
- Implementing Community 360 in your newsroom

Highlights for Ad Managers & Sales Reps:

KELLY WIRGES — RYAN DOHRN — TIM SMITH — JOE MATHES

- Strategic prospecting
- Consultative selling
- Time management mania
- Closing business
- How to own digital in your market
- 10 things you must ask your sales staff
- Why print still matters
- Overcoming objections
- Habit of superstar salespeople
- Outselling your competition
- Selling sponsored content
- What's your pitch? Elevator speeches that work
- What's in your subject line? Emails that get opened and read.
- How to be a manager without being a jerk
- Setting goals, achieving goals, and inspiring others to do the same
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By STEVE GRAY

4 tips for leading news media companies in times of change

Those leading teams in media organizations need to be forthcoming about information that motivates change, give context to their teams, involve employees in decision making, and creatively use available resources to solve problems.

When your organization needs large-scale change (and what disrupted media organization doesn't?), how do you get it done?

Terabytes have been written about the strategies and tactics legacy media organizations need. I've written my share, too, at MediaReset.com. But I've seen precious little written about how to lead and manage effective change in carrying out these strategies.

That's a strange oversight, because most great strategies are doomed to fail if they aren't combined with excellent approaches in dealing with people. As in the human body, change in an organization will attract internal antibodies intent on neutralizing, co-opting, or marginalizing the intended outcomes.

The fact is, life-saving changes in a disrupted organization can only be accomplished through an effective mix of people skills and good strategies. Good strategies are almost always doomed to indifferent outcomes or outright failure if they aren't nurtured through effective leadership tactics.

In my 40 years of managing, I've come to believe in a set of key approaches for mobilizing people around necessary change and getting things done. I'll share some of them here.

At this point, I no longer remember which of these I discovered on my own and which were borrowed or adapted from others. But for me, these are related models that form a coherent approach to organizational leadership and change. I've used them over and over again for years.

1. Provide new information. I've blogged more fully on this principle before. But I need to repeat it here, because — for me — this is where all organizational change begins. And in this case, I know exactly where this wisdom originated — with Morrie Shechtman, a brilliant corporate change consultant I first met in the



1990s. Here's how Shechtman put it: *"The only thing that changes people's behavior is new information. They'll go right on doing what they're doing right now, until they get new information."*

Changing behavior in your organization almost always needs to begin with new information. You have information that convinces you change is imperative. If others don't have the same information, or don't believe it, they'll resist or ignore your efforts to implement change. So the first step in mobilizing your organization, department, or work group is figuring out how to bring the rest of the team up to speed. In a disrupted industry, the necessary information is usually about existential threats or new-field opportunities. Figuring out how to bring the team on board with your new information is an art in itself. But most leaders can do it, once they realize it's the critical first step in engaging and energizing their people around a new objective.

2. Create meaning. I don't remember where I first heard this, but it was a simple statement: It's a manager's job to create meaning. This is closely connected to No. 1. New information, by itself, isn't enough. It requires interpretation, which makes meaning for the organization. A good leader either provides that interpretation or — better

still — leads the team as a group in figuring out the interpretation. This can mean, for example, brainstorming together about what this new information means to us (our company, department, or work group). What are the threats to us? What are the opportunities for us? What should we do about it? Why? What are the good outcomes we want to achieve? How should we do it? This creates a very different environment from typical work settings. Too often, people are toiling along individually and routinely from day to day, just doing what they understand their jobs to be. The leader's job is to transform work from a series of tasks into a sense of collective movement toward a better, bigger outcome. Then the tasks become milestones with meaning, united with the overall goals of the team. The effective leader then takes frequent opportunities to reference the shared goals, to celebrate tasks accomplished along the way, and to invite any necessary rethinking to keep the group moving toward the desired end. This implies the third principle:

3. Involve people in deciding how to get it done. Many managers labor under the belief that it's their responsibility to figure out every problem and develop every strategy. This is a soul-killing burden — both for you and for the people you are trying to lead. It kills you, because nobody can be right all the time, and there's tremendous pressure in assuming you must be. It kills your people because it assumes they can't think as well as you can, leaving them to be mere robots carrying out your instructions. I learned many years ago that I could develop much better strategies and tactics by bringing a group of people together than I could by thinking on my own. Usually this conversation starts with No. 1: "Here's the new information I'm thinking about." Then

it moves to the leader's own first pass at No. 2: "Here's what I think this means." Then it moves into No. 3: "What do you think?" Those four little words have huge power. As a young manager, still assuming I had to know everything and make every decision, I discovered them almost by accident. But they became central to my approach to leadership. I came to realize that when I asked that question, it opened dialogues with people that 1) produced better tactics than I would have developed alone, and 2) helped them to grow in their own ability to solve problems and create new initiatives. And there's a third and tremendously powerful result: When people join together in deciding what to do rather than just executing tasks they are assigned, they become much more committed to making the plan succeed. It's "our plan," not "your plan." I've seen it again and again — when executing the plan, each member of the group will try much harder to overcome any barriers than if they had not participated in deciding what to do and how to do it.

4. Recognize the boxes within boxes.

In organizations of even modest size, there are layers. There's someone at the top who carries responsibility for the overall health, direction, and success of the organization. At the next level, there are people who are responsible for specific parts of the organization's activities — sales, product, finance, etc. At the next level, and maybe many levels below that, are the people who handle the necessary daily work — departments, work groups, teams, and so on. And within those, there are people actually creating the products, selling the products, processing the budgets and invoices, driving trucks,

answering phones, and so on. At all of these layers, a person's possibilities are constrained. There's only so much money and time, only a certain number of people, only a certain limited range of available choices. Wherever you are in the organization, you function within one of these boxes. It consists of the expectations your group needs to meet and the possibilities available to the group for doing that. The boundaries are determined by the organization's resources (people and money) and the external conditions you face (e.g. the economy, customer expectations, competitor's actions, etc.). Within your box, you have the people who report to you and the resources available to you. You work within the box and do the best you can. Within that box, you can use Nos. 1, 2, and 3 above to mobilize your team in solving problems and developing opportunities. When you do, you will often find that the first things people suggest are more people or more money. (The latter may take the form of people, equipment, technology, marketing dollars, etc.) As a manager or group leader, you often need to say no to these first suggestions. You know the limits of the box you're in, and it's often your job to remind the people in your group what those constraints are. And, contradictory though it may seem, it's also your job to help them realize there are many creative possibilities available within the box. My favorite analogy for this is a scene in the 1995 movie, *Apollo 13*. It comes at the point when Mission Control now understands the exact nature of the problem in the space capsule and knows that the astronauts will die in space if it can't be solved. In this scene, a handful of engineers and scientists gather around a table spread with an assortment of objects — parts, tools, pipes,

etc. I don't remember the line, but someone says something like this: "That's everything they've got up there. Out of this, we've got to make a solution." And, as history shows, they did. It required the creative use of materials and objects in ways never intended, and it saved the lives of the astronauts. It's up to you, as a manager, to convene this sort of meeting whenever necessary — either around a problem or an opportunity. When you do, you use Nos. 1, 2, and 3 above as you define the problem and invite the team to figure out the best possible solution. Then you invite them to be creative in applying whatever the limited available resources may be. For a few very promising opportunities or very threatening problems, you may need to go outside the box to see if you can get additional resources. This might be from your boss, senior management, or shareholders, banks, or investors, depending on your level in the organization. But most of the time, you will find there are remarkably creative solutions available even within your box, if you use your main resource — the thinking power of the people on your team.

With these four principles, you will be amazed at the new paths you can find and the achievements your group can accomplish. They work in routine management as well as in life-or-death situations. They can, in fact, be the basis of a whole career in effective leadership.

Author/Contact: Steve Gray is vice president of strategy and innovation at Morris Communications, based in Augusta, Georgia, USA. He previously led the American Press Institute (API) Newspaper Next program. This post is part of the Disruptive Innovation blog at INMA.org.

— Reprinted from INMA

By LAURA HAZARD OWEN

Reuters TV finds value not just in making its content free, but in giving it away to other publishers

Embracing distributed content: “Sometimes we’re going to reach consumers on our own platforms, and sometimes we’re quite happy for that to be on other people’s platforms.”



In a little less than a year, Reuters has completely changed the strategy around its news video product, Reuters TV. It's gone from charging for its iOS app to not just giving its content away for free across many platforms, but also letting other publishers use that content on their own sites and in their own apps.

That strategy is paying off in terms of recognition — Apple calls the Reuters TV app one of its “essentials” — and uptake.

When Reuters TV was first launched as an iPhone app last February (don't confuse this with the Reuters TV YouTube channel, by the way, which was launched in 2012 but no longer exists), it had a paywall: \$1.99 a month, with limited ads. The app lets users choose how long they have to watch — anywhere from 5 to 30 minutes — and then creates a program of news clips tailored to time and interest. Reuters TV is sleek and well designed; its content changes based on your past viewing activity, and it is a genuinely good way to catch up on the news quickly. (You can even download episodes for offline viewing.)

But a paywall on an unknown video app hindered adoption. “We were best served by loosening that barrier, particularly at an early stage,” Reuters TV managing director Isaac Showman told Digiday last year. Last August, Reuters dropped the paywall on Reuters TV (users can still choose to pay \$1.99 a month for an ad-free version). It's launched the app on iPad, Apple TV, and web — with web app users now accounting for 25 percent of all the app's active users, even though the web app only launched last month.

In November, Reuters launched Reuters TV for Publishers. “It allows any publisher to come to our website and, free of charge, download a widget that integrates onto their site” and provides a five-minute, curated news program,” Showman told me. “They're able to put their ads

in front of it and they keep 100 percent of the revenue.” The signup process is designed to be quick; publishers customize their fonts and insert ad tags, then get the code for the embeddable widget.

The payoff for Reuters, Showman said, is that more people become familiar with Reuters TV's brand. The Reuters TV for Publishers app includes links back to Reuters' website and social sharing buttons, as well as an option for users to enter their phone number to get a download link for the mobile app.

“Sometimes we're going to reach consumers on our own platforms, and sometimes we're quite happy for that to be on other people's platforms,” Showman explained. “If we can contribute to other publishers' success as a part of that, it's a win-win for both of us, and something we're really happy to do.”

Since the offering rolled out in November, “dozens” of publishers have integrated it onto their sites, “with more signing up each day,” Showman said. Reuters wouldn't give me a full list of participants, but pointed me to an Entrepreneur.com article and to Canada's Globe and Mail. (If you have an adblocker turned on, you have to turn it off to see Reuters TV's widget.)

The Globe and Mail added the widget to its main news page on December 9, and plans to roll it out on mobile later this week. “We're testing reader appetite for five-minute news verticals,” Cynthia Young, The Globe and Mail's head of audience, told me. “We wanted to see whether our readers like that kind of packaging for news.”

Video



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Of the users who view Reuters TV on The Globe and Mail's site, 20 to 25 percent of them watch the entire five-minute program, according to Young. "We expect to see higher than that on mobile," she said. (The Globe and Mail audience's use of adblockers is not particularly high, she noted.) The Globe and Mail — and other Reuters TV for Publishers users — have to go back to Reuters to ask for analytics, though "their turnaround is quick."

In general, experimenting with products like this is a great way for a publication to "test out content theories," Young said. "We could produce a similar thing, but Reuters has done the format very well." Down the line, if The Globe and Mail were to decide to produce its own short news segments — say, with a Canadian emphasis — "we would work with Reuters to look at the product they're producing and, maybe, figure out some ways that we could license it."

Reuters has put a lot of work into the technology behind Reuters TV. Each time that Reuters decides to do a news story as a video, it produces three lengths of that story — "small, medium, and large." The app's algorithms choose the right video length to deliver to each user based on the amount of time the user wants to watch for and that user's past preferences. The algorithm also accounts for users' locations and interests and the judgment of editors. An internal tool lets Reuters analyze each video's performance to see how it resonates with a small sample group of users before it's pushed out to a larger group.

The 15-minute program has been the most popular option on Reuters TV's various apps so far, Showman said, because that's the default. World news is the most popular coverage category.

So far, Reuters' new strategy appears to be paying off. Active users tripled between the third and fourth quarters of 2015, though Reuters wouldn't give me an actual user number.

"The technology that goes into this is state-of-the-art stuff," Showman said. "We believe other news organizations shouldn't just leave other platform builders to build, but should be at the forefront of this."

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By SUZANNE VRANICA

FTC Issues Guidelines for Native Ads

Agency seeks to make sure that publisher and advertisers aren't misleading consumers



PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

The Federal Trade Commission issued guidelines on Tuesday for so-called native advertising, which are ads designed to mimic a website's editorial look and feel, as it seeks to make sure that consumers aren't being misled.

Over the past few years, publishers have aggressively embraced the practice, also called "sponsored content," as they have sought new ad formats that consumers are more likely to see and engage with than ad types such as banner ads, which people have become experts at ignoring and avoiding.

Publishers from Web startups like BuzzFeed to major newspapers including The Wall Street Journal and the New York Times NYT - 3.06% now publish native ads or sponsored articles that relate to the products and services of advertisers.

The regulatory body said today "regardless of the medium in which an advertising or promotional message is disseminated, deception occurs when consumers acting reasonably under the circumstances are misled about its nature or source, and such

misleading impression is likely to affect their decisions or conduct regarding the advertised product or the advertising."

The FTC also issued an 11-page guide for businesses that can help them comply with FTC policy on native ads. It included lengthy and detailed hypothetical examples and what disclosures would be required.

The FTC gave examples of how to make "clear and prominent" disclosures in native ads and said that "disclosures must be understandable."

Terms that are likely understood by consumers include "Ad" and "Sponsored Advertising Content," the regulatory body said. It added that advertisers should not use terms such as "Promoted" or "Promoted Stories," which are "at best ambiguous and potentially could mislead consumers that advertising content is endorsed by a publisher site."

"The FTC has put a lot of teeth into the guidelines" and they are "very specific in nature," said Linda Goldstein, partner at Manatt, Phelps & Phillips. Ms. Goldstein points out that there are several guidelines that advertisers and publisher should note, such as a disclosure should be in proximity to the headline on the native ad. She said that guideline is particularly noteworthy because it's very "specific" and not what is "customarily done today."

Another guideline suggests that if consumers are going to click on a link and be taken to a native ad, they need to be told before they click that they will be taken to an ad.

"In 2016, we will begin to see cases brought in the native advertising area," added Ms. Goldstein. "I believe the FTC will use selective cases to put more meat around these guidelines."

The FTC has been looking into this type of advertising for some time. In 2013, it hosted informal workshops for advertisers, publishers and legal experts that was entitled: "Blurred Lines: Advertising or Content." The meetings included discussion about whether media outlets were adequately identifying sponsored stories on their websites as promotional content and if the practice of native advertising misleads consumers.

Native ad spending in the U.S. is expected to grow 34% in 2015 to reach \$4.3 billion, according to ad-tracker eMarketer, which cited data from research firm Socintel360.

There is little sign that native advertising is losing steam. Experts say that the rise of ad-blocking software is also adding more fuel to the growth of marketing technique. Moreover, many believe that sponsored stories are more likely to be shared on social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter, which helps marketers generate more interest and buzz for their products.

For publishers, native ads also attractive because they often command a hefty premium over other types of online ads.

— Reprinted from the Wall Street Journal

By HECTOR TOBAR

Best journalists know how to the connect with readers

EUGENE, Ore. — JONATHAN BACH's dream job is in a profession that's widely reviled, poorly compensated and often dangerous. A lot of people tell him it's doomed to become obsolete. None of that seems to matter to him.

He still wants to be a journalist.

This summer Mr. Bach got his first taste of daily newspaper reporting, at the East Oregonian, a publication based in Pendleton. He covered rodeos, Native American tribes and the opening of a new bar called the Strip 'n Chute. He wrote a lot, wrote fast — and earned minimum wage.

"It's the best job in the world," he said, with all the earnestness you'd expect from a 21-year-old college senior.

To enter journalism these days you have to be a true believer. If you can find an entry-level job — and newspaper staffs declined by 10 percent last year — you will more than likely take a vow of poverty worthy of a monk. Even in television, a news reporter can make as little as \$18,000 a year.

In our polarized society, public trust of the media is at an all-time low, according to a recent Gallup poll. Across the political spectrum, some accuse us of spreading insidious liberal ideas, while others call us lackeys of a corporate, right-wing conspiracy. Worse yet, people think of us as heartless jerks who'd make a little boy cry or kick an immigrant in pursuit of a story.

The truth is that the best journalists connect with readers, viewers and listeners by being open-minded and compassionate. That's one reason so many people remain in the profession, despite the poor pay and long hours. As Mr. Bach learned on assignments like interviewing a rodeo camp volunteer, empathy is a key part of the job.

"You get to share stories and you get to see things through someone else's eyes every day," he said.

I tell the young reporters I teach at the University of Oregon to ignore the gloom that surrounds the profession and its future. People will always have an appetite for true stories well told.

And they will never stop wanting essential information, delivered quickly and accurately. When a gunman opened fire on Oct. 1 at a community college in Roseburg, some 70 miles south of Eugene, several news outlets contacted our university's journalism

department and asked: Do you know a young freelance reporter or photographer we can hire? Right away?

Cameron Shultz, a graduate student who was hired by national television networks and local stations, took his camera and captured evocative images at an evacuation center and a candlelight vigil.

We've tried to teach our students that even the simplest story requires craft and discipline.

Consider the recent example of Alison Parker, a 24-year-old reporter for a Virginia television station. Like Mr. Bach, she'd started her career as an intern. Her last story was about Smith Mountain Lake, a local landmark.

The video that Ms. Parker's killer posted of her murder reveals that he was pointing a gun at her, within her field of vision, for at least 10 seconds before he opened fire. Ms. Parker was interviewing the head of the local chamber of commerce. She was too focused on doing her job well to realize her life was in danger.

"When you go on television, you lose a bit of yourself," said Rebecca Force, a veteran television news reporter and director who is now a professor at the University of Oregon. When a reporter is on live, as Ms. Parker was, Professor Force said: "You're in the moment. You have little time. You're on. There is no going back and erasing it. You have just one take."

Ms. Parker and her cameraman, Adam Ward, died reporting the sort of everyday, unabashedly local story that is the bread and butter of news operations everywhere. She held the mike steady as her interviewee said, "This is our community and we want to share information that will help us grow and develop..."

Young journalists operate on a strange mix of adrenaline and idealism. They savor the rush that comes with making a deadline, or conquering the stage fright of a live broadcast. And they believe that if they master those skills, they'll contribute something important to their communities.

"I don't think that one photograph is going to change the world, but it's a record of where we are," the Mexican journalist Rubén Espinosa said in one of his last interviews before he was killed in Mexico City in July. He covered the drama unfolding in the

Mexican state of Veracruz: official corruption, violent organized crime, disappearances, protest and resistance.

Mr. Espinosa's work had earned him death threats and the enmity of powerful people in Veracruz. Many American journalists working abroad have faced similar dangers from those who would silence them — including James Foley, a graduate of Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism.

"He gave his life trying to expose the world to the suffering of the Syrian people," Mr. Foley's mother said, after he was killed by his Islamic State captors in Syria last year.

As a kid growing up in Bend, Ore., Mr. Bach dreamed of being a foreign correspondent. He'd fall asleep listening to BBC radio reports from distant lands. India. Pakistan. Russia.

His goal now is to report from Eastern Europe. In addition to studying journalism, he's in his third year of Russian language classes. And he's already been to Ukraine and Azerbaijan to try his hand at freelance reporting.

"There's nothing like dropping into a country for a week, and reporting a story, and getting it published," he said.

Mr. Bach was also among the University of Oregon students asked to cover the tragedy in Roseburg. For The Daily Beast, he interviewed friends of and English teacher who died in the shooting, and a nursing student who suddenly found her class transformed into an emergency room.

I'm confident that Mr. Bach conducted himself professionally on this assignment. And that he remembered what we professors taught him and his fellow students when we sent them to cover stories on campus, at City Hall and at county fairs:

Be respectful to the people you interview. Double-check the spelling of every name. And always make your deadlines.

Héctor Tobar, an assistant professor in the School of Journalism and Communication at the University of Oregon, is the author, most recently, of "Deep Down Dark: The Untold Stories of 33 Men Buried in a Chilean Mine, and the Miracle That Set Them Free," and a contributing opinion writer.

— Reprinted from The New York Times

By CHRIS SUTCLIFFE

What can regional publishers do to stimulate growth and sustainability?

It's the worst kept secret in journalism that regional publishers in the UK are in trouble. Circulations and ad revenue are tumbling and regional publishers are gambling on taking costs out fast enough to help ease them across to digital-first publishing, a strategy we've previously argued is folly.

So what can regional publishers do to stay relevant, serve their local communities and be profitable? There are examples in the UK of publishers - like Archant - who are focused on diversification into service provision.

Its chief executive Jeff Henry has told TheMediaBriefing why doing so is a good decision both for the company and the community it serves:

"For us, it's an opportunity for us to diversify with paid revenues from consumers in the area. Providing broadband to rural communities where we're well-established, a major player in those communities. It was just a natural fit for us."

But what else can regional publishers do to ensure sustainability in the face of changing audience demand? Speaking at news:rewired in London, representatives from a variety of regional publications and publishers discussed how they've developed new models in local media.

New models of funding

Crowdfunding has been tried by publications before to various degrees of success. While Amsterdam-based De Correspondent has gone from strength to strength having just hit 40,000 members, a similar attempt funded in part by the Guardian shut its doors earlier this year.

But the idea of membership is one that will be perennially popular, and is looking like it will be increasingly vital for publishers who are relying on a loyal audience for sustainability.

Alon Aviram is co-founder of The Bristol Cable, a publisher operated by a cooperative of 500 members, though they're looking to grow that number. He argues that fostering a sense of membership is vital to achieving that goal:

"It's really about enfranchising people to feel first of all that they can contribute, that they've got ownership of the Cooperative and that it's actually meaningful. We're trying to flip the pyramid of ownership, essentially."

The print product - which currently ships 10,000 copies per edition — is a vital part of that strategy.

Aviram believes that the error made by more traditionally funded regional publishers is trying to emulate the nationals:

"What we identified when we started off was essentially a lot of local media is just replicating their larger counterparts in the sense that they're advertising based and based heavily on press releases, on sponsored content, and because their business model relied on advertising [that] restricts the type of content that you can publish, makes it less engaging for your readership."

And recent research into the hunger for good journalism suggests that aim is correct:

In terms of sustainability, though, The Bristol Cable requires a five-fold growth in the members of its cooperative. In the meantime, however, it has received a \$60,000 grant from a US-based foundation that has the aim of funding investigative journalism. Aviram says:

"The way we envisage us moving forward is we just need to increase the membership. At the moment we're on 500 members paying an average of £2.50 a month. If we can move up to 2,500 by 2017 we will essentially, on a skeleton framework, be sustainable."

Rediscovering a specialty

Greg Hadfield is the editorial director for Brighton & Hove Independent. He shares the sentiment that it's focusing on quality journalism over 'churnalism' that can be the salvation for local media:

"What I've learned over the last three years when I've been working for Brighton & Hove Independent which... sold five months ago to Johnston Press... is a modest proposition: How can we help create and sustain a network of 100 free weekly quality newspapers in five years[.]

"Brighton and Hove Independent set up four years ago. We turned it from churnalism and press releases into what I hope would be much more of a local newspaper."

He cites the paper's profitability as a reason for its acquisition by Johnston Press - which he notes is the first time Johnston Press has acquired a local publisher in a decade. However, with a circulation of just under 14,000 at time of acquisition and a total staff headcount of four people, it was still a relatively small operation. So instead of focusing on scale, he instead argues that sustainability as a local publisher is dependent on rediscovering the inherent value that a smaller publisher can provide:

"How do we disrupt big media? First of all it's by showing we can be profitable at lower cost by producing a better product. What services can be offered?

"You can then create content that's syndicated, whether there's the great columnist that could be syndicated in some sort of package, in what could be some sort of franchise model."

Giving communities the keys to our doors

Andrea Iannuzzi is editor for AGL Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso. As the publisher of the longest running newspaper in Europe - formed in 1664 - they have a reputation and an extremely venerable brand. But, he argues, that isn't enough to be sustainable in an increasingly digital world.

Instead, he argues that focusing on community - a process he calls 'giving the communities the keys to our own doors' - is a vital first step on the road to sustainability:

"Six months ago we decided to create a social title; this is not a website, it's only a social title, to share our look and stories to a wider audience. We called it 'The Italian Chronicle', and we created a Facebook page, a Twitter handle, an Instagram account and a Pinterest account."

Building a community is a hard task, and when that community is distributed across a variety of social platform is more difficult still. It required thought around which platforms should be used - ultimately they decided against handing over the reins of the Facebook page to the community because of questions of accountability.

But the experiment, which is ongoing despite only originally being planned for a July - September run, puts AGL in a good position to take advantage of growing mobile audiences:

"We think that social journalism is no more a matter of geographic vicinity or interest proximity, but a question of emotional proximity. We started with 100 followers and in one month we had 1500 followers 30,000 likes to the photos."

Sustainability for regional publishers remains a difficult goal. But endeavours like those described above demonstrate that there is no single path to success - even though a few will likely end in failure.— *Reprinted from Editor and Publisher*

— *Reprinted from The Media Briefing*

By ERIK SASS

Buffett Buys Virginia Newspaper, BH Media Now Owns 32

There aren't many people who can lift the spirits of a flagging industry all by themselves, but Warren Buffett is one of them.

On New Year's Eve, BH Media Group — the newspaper division of Buffett's investment conglomerate Berkshire Hathaway — announced the acquisition of another small newspaper, signaling the continued confidence of the "Oracle of Omaha" in the long-term viability of local news media as a business.

On Thursday evening, BH Media Group announced the acquisition of *The Free-Lance Star* of Fredericksburg, Virginia — with a daily circulation of 31,700 — from Sandton Capital Partners, an investment firm that specializes in distressed properties.

Terms of the deal — which also includes the newspaper's associated printing operation, Print Innovators — were not disclosed. Sandton originally acquired the newspaper in June 2014 during bankruptcy proceedings.

The acquisition of *The Free Lance-Star* brings BH Media's portfolio to 32 daily newspapers, as well as dozens of other publications — many of them serving small and mid-sized communities. However, in Virginia, it also owns one of the larger regional dailies, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, as well as Richmond.com

As noted, BH Media's string of newspaper acquisitions is a vote of faith in the beleaguered business at a time when many have voiced doubts about its future. Back in March 2013, Buffett explained his thinking in his annual letter to BH investors, noting that while newspaper profits will probably decline for the foreseeable future, in the long term, their position as sole providers of local news will ensure their continued existence and vitality.

Buffett stated: "Newspapers continue to reign supreme, however, in the delivery of local news. If you want to know what's going on in your town — whether the news is about the mayor or taxes or high school football — there is no substitute for a local newspaper that is doing its job... Wherever there is a pervasive sense of community, a paper that serves the special informational needs of that community will remain indispensable to a significant portion of its residents."

Buffett further predicted that "papers delivering comprehensive and reliable information to tightly-bound communities and having a sensible Internet strategy will remain viable for a long time. We do not believe that success will come from cutting either the news content or frequency of publication... Our goal is to keep our papers loaded with content of interest to our readers and to be paid appropriately by those who find us useful, whether the product they view is in their hands or on the Internet."

— *Reprinted from Publishers Daily*

By JUDD SLIVKA

Five mobile journalism basics to remember



We talk about apps and frames, quick-to-social and between-casts. And we talk about when we should and shouldn't use mobile devices for journalism. Well, let's stop talking about application and talk for a few minutes about execution.

Let's go back to basics with a few mobile journalism tips to make your life easier, regardless of the equipment you're using. The inspiration here is the number of outlets that are having reporters shoot video on phones and the resulting number of videos that are painful to watch.

First basic

Hold the phone sideways. You want video that fills up the 4:3 or 16:9 aspect ratio of the device your audience is using to watch your video. Portrait (that is, vertical) video doesn't work except in limited circumstances such as SnapChat and the startup VerVid's site. Will we eventually go to more vertical video and be less annoyed with it? Yes. But as long as TVs are rectangles, narrow up-and-down video with black bars or generator graphics around them are going to be ugly. Besides, video is about immersion and showing, not telling; you should use every inch of the screen that you can.

Second basic

Put the phone in airplane mode. This sounds simple and yet many videos are marred by the ding or vibration of incoming mail, text or calls. This obviously makes a difference when you're recording audio, but I've seen the phone's vibration jar video, too.

Third basic

Remember the microphones really aren't that great. The fact that we can record on a phone is pretty impressive in itself, but the microphones aren't professional quality. They tend to be in the wrong place, and they pick up everything in the room because they're omnidirectional. And because the microphones are in the phone case, they're susceptible to handling noise. So take a few common-sense precautions:

- **Make sure the microphone is pointed directly at the sound source you want to record.** If you're recording audio on the iPhone, that means pointing the bottom of the phone at whatever you want to record. If you're recording video, the rear microphone is located right next to the camera lens. Android phones vary, but a quick Google search should get you an answer.
- **Get close.** If you're shooting video without a supplementary lens, you'll want to be within about 3 feet of your subject anyway. Be as close as you can without freaking out the person. And make sure there's minimal noise between you and them, since the mic will pick it up. Block the wind with your body, for example.
- **Don't cuddle the phone in your hand.** The proper way to hold a microphone is three fingertips on one side and the thumb tip on the opposite side. It keeps the movement of your hand from being transmitted through the mic body. Same thing with your phone, which is even more prone to handling noise when you have a case on it. Hold the phone like an egg; watch the sound quality go up.

Fourth basic

Pay attention to light. This is a basic rule for all photography and videography, but the sensor size on mobile phones is small enough that it intensifies the exposure gap between light and dark much more than would a DSLR or mirrorless camera. A few common-sense precautions will make shooting mobile easier:

- Be aware of where the strongest light is and don't be opposite from it. Think of a half-circle extending from your shoulders to behind you. If the strongest light source on the room is along that 180-degree arc, you'll be fine. Shooting outdoors? If you can feel the sun on your back, you're in the right shooting position.
- Don't be afraid to position people for lighting purposes if you have to. I could go into a whole thing on how to fake a three-point lighting set up out in the field, but you don't want to read that. Remember this: The strongest light should be facing the interview subject, the second-strongest light should be from the side and the third strongest should be from behind. Want well-lit interviews while inside? Bring your interview subject toward a window and have him or her face it. Then stand in front of them, offset about 20 to 30 degrees. Natural light will fill their face, your phone's sensor will be happy, life will be grand.

Fifth basic

Stabilize to the extent you can. Because we're not talking about mobile kits here, let's assume all you have to stabilize your phone-that-weighs-less-than-a-sandwich is you. Since you're holding the phone horizontally (right?), you should have a thumb and forefinger on either end of the phone. Tuck your elbows into your body. That'll provide some stability. Try and shoot leaning up against a wall. If there are no walls, make yourself stable by placing your feet shoulder width apart with the back of your dominant foot about 12 inches ahead of the toe of your back foot.

None of these tips are rocket science. They just bear repeating. We can connect \$1,500 of lenses, frames and sound equipment to our mobile equipment. And if it's narrow video or video with audio that's unbearably soft or has weird "you've got mail" sounds in the middle of it, all we will have done is annoy the audience.

— Judd Slivka is an assistant professor of convergence journalism at the Missouri School of Journalism and a MobileVideoDIY instructor at the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute.

By DAVID CHAVERN

Digital ads, learning to love print again

"Print is again going to attract advertisers who are willing to say: 'I don't care about being cool. I want to drive big sales at a good price.'"

The digital arena has been deeply confusing for both advertisers and publishers. At first, we thought it was just like print — so we ripped out static ads from print publications and pasted them on people's screens as banner ads. Then we decided that it was just like TV, so we made people watch commercials (or pieces of them) before we could see the content — just like a TV timeout at a football game.

It turns out that the public didn't react much to either, because the digital realm isn't like other places that advertisers were used to. It is much more dynamic than print and much more intimate than TV. People get to direct and customize much of their digital experience — looking at what they want to look at, when they want to look at it, and with whom they want to look at it. In that same vein, it has proven hard to make people look at digital ads. You have to get them to want to look at them.

The good news is that the advertising industry is experimenting like crazy and slowly coming up with more ads that people want to look at all the time.

I fully expect that by the end of 2016 we will see many more advertisers and news organizations coming out and saying: "We finally have digital ads that are driving big revenue!"

But it won't all be about a digital future. I also predict that there will be a new and growing appreciation for the power and value of print advertising. Sir Martin Sorrell says it's true. The simple fact is that no matter how cool the digital realm is, print is still an awesome technology that does something almost magical in our high-speed world: It keeps people engaged. Print is again going to attract advertisers who are willing to say: "I don't care about being cool. I want to drive big sales at a good price."

— David Chavern is president and CEO of the Newspaper Association of America.

By JENNIFER FAULKNER

Free police scanner apps useful tool for reporters

Police scanners are key for keeping up with the many crimes and incidents that occur daily. Rather than spending hundreds of dollars, you can download free apps with even more capabilities than standard police scanners. Reporters could greatly benefit from having a police scanner right at their fingertips anytime and anywhere.

There are several apps available with the same basic functions. Some features include: timers to start and stop stations, chat rooms and GPS to locate feeds. Here are a few free police scanner apps:

Police Scanner+ Free

(<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/policescanner+-free/id498408628?mt=8>) is an app made for the iPhone. It allows you to browse weather, police, EMS, fire, railroad and radio stations by popularity or location. This app allows you to search scanners in 37 South Carolina counties, as well as other states and other countries.

5-0 Radio Police Scanner

(<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/5-0-radio-police-scanner/id356336433?mt=8>) is another iPhone app, which broadcasts live police, fire, aircraft, railroad, marine and emergency radio stations. This app features a map that finds where the scanner feed is. This app includes a table of frequently used codes, which is great for reporters with little experience with police codes.



Free apps for police scanners are available for your smart phone. They can be useful for finding breaking news stories.

Scanner Radio

(<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.scannerradio&hl=en>) is an app designed for Android phones. It locates radio stations through GPS and includes aviation, marine, amateur radio, disaster event and public safety channels. This app can send notifications to the user's phone when there are a certain number of listeners to a single station. With more people tuning in to the station, this is a great feature for breaking news.

"I became a journalist to come as close as possible to the heart of the world."

— Henry Luce *Reprinted from FishbowlNY*

By CORY BERGMAN

11 Hard Truths About Mobile Media



This was first published in the Mobile Media Memo newsletter.

These are going to sting a little. You ready?

1. It's going to get worse

Mobile is disrupting all aspects of the media business — behavior, revenue and brand — and we have yet to experience the full extent of its bite.

“I think things are probably much, much worse industry-wise than people acknowledge,” The Awl’s John Herrman explained to The Verge. “It is, to the web, what the web was to what came before it.”

This time, it’s not just print in the crosshairs. It’s everyone.

2. Everyone is a frenemy

The friend vs. frenemy argument is absurd. Everyone is a frenemy these days, battling for the same eyeballs and the same revenue which advertisers pay to reach them.

Technology companies are looking more like media companies, hiring their own editors. Some partnerships are complementary, others are substitutional, and it’s increasingly difficult to decipher which is which. That’s in large part because...

3. Opinions are drowning out facts

In an industry that’s more competitive and complex than ever, it’s nearly impossible to get the straight scoop on anything. Companies are extremely protective of mobile performance metrics, and partnership details are secured under NDAs.

Meanwhile, the explosion of user behavior data inside media companies creates its own cloud of confusion. There’s so much data, you can pretty much justify any plan of action with the right subset of numbers. It’s hard to know what’s really working.

Adding insult to injury, some pundits and tech writers are forming their own conclusions without any real data to support their opinions. They praise startups that aren’t growing and criticize partnerships that are working. The net effect is a growing sense of confusion.

4. Faster, better and easier always win

As history has shown us, users always gravitate toward user experiences that are faster, easier and better. And as an industry, they’ve gravitated away from us, consuming our content through superior mobile experiences.

More people get news from Facebook — 41% of U.S. adults — than any other source. That’s because it’s a faster, better and easier experience to get news.

Told you this would sting.

Sure, the tech giants have more resources, but let’s be honest: our industry isn’t known for obsessing about our users (for example, see “News sites are fatter and slower than ever.”) Few media organizations practice human-centered design, product teams are a relatively new phenomenon and most mobile media products still do just one thing: display abbreviated content from a single brand.

5. Apps are better

Let’s stop calling them sites; they’re apps. Facebook is an app. Twitter is an app. Snapchat is an app. Apple News is an app. Netflix is an app. Some of them also have sites that get a small fraction of their overall traffic (~ 15% for FB and Twitter), but the distribution disruption is driven almost entirely by apps and the ecosystems designed to make them flourish.

Most of your web referrals are viewed in someone else’s app.

Apps are easier, faster and better for this sort of thing (Facebook “Instant Articles” is exhibit A), and apps are extending into new devices: wearables, TVs and cars, where web browsers are nowhere to be found. Apple and Google are incentivized to keep it that way.

6. Websites are in behavioral decline

I hate browsing the web on my phone. Everyone does.

Users don’t type in URLs on their phones. They tap apps, they tap links in apps, they tap notifications, they search in the device’s built-in search bar and they increasingly use Siri and Google Voice to search. When users are looking at a web page on a phone, they’re almost always doing it inside an app (which they think is the app, not a website.)

As mobile grows, user behavior is shifting from websites to apps as the entry points.

Yes, we all love the openness of the web, but the industry needs to skip through the stages of grief to “acceptance” as quickly as possible. No, websites aren’t dead. But they’re in a steep decline

for the foreseeable future. Once we realize the depth of this behavioral shift, the more we understand how to capitalize on it.

7. We now have a battle on two fronts

I'm not suggesting we abandon our websites or stop working with Facebook, Apple, YouTube and the rest of the mega-distributors. To the contrary, we should continue to maximize social and search referrals while relentlessly experimenting with distributed content. That's the first front.

But you can't fight on the first front without fighting on the second. I don't know about you, but I'm not punting on direct relationships with our users. Since this industry is obsessed with BuzzFeed, I'll use them as an example: while everyone buzzes about BuzzFeed's social distribution, the company has built up a mobile app arm with a larger product staff than most of its competitors.

The second front is more expensive, competitive and risky than the first, but we don't have a choice.

8. Shorter content is not a mobile strategy

When starting to brainstorm an app or an email product, the discussion almost always begins with how to take existing content and "shorten" it for mobile.

Just shortening your website content for a mobile app — video included — is like putting radio on TV: adding a camera that shows the host talking awkwardly into a microphone. It's the price of entry perhaps, but it doesn't guarantee an audience. A beautiful design is great, too, but it doesn't mean people will keep using it.

Even worse with mobile, it certainly doesn't guarantee any revenue.

9. Starting with solutions is suicide

These days media businesses require either massive scale, or a niche built upon a vein of gold. The easy "gets" are gone, and if you fall in the middle, you fall through the world.

That's why we need start with a problem. Life's too short to build something that nobody wants. How can we be sure to tackle a real problem? Alas, we can't be 100% sure, but we can minimize the risk a lot by observing and talking to people.

This is the core of human-centered design, and we can increase our chances of success by considering problems that go beyond news consumption. At the ONA's Mobile Design Camp in Seattle last Friday, the group came up with better products for solving "gift giving" problems than "news filtering" problems. What about tackling information-related problems with health care, travel, retail, transportation or finance?

Dig broader and bigger to find new veins of gold.

10. Many of the best product people don't want to work in big media

They want to work at startups.

That's why we should act more like startups ourselves by tackling hard problems, bending the rules, embracing failure, exuding patience, having fun and handing our product talent massive amounts of freedom (i.e. stop telling them what to do and when to do it.)

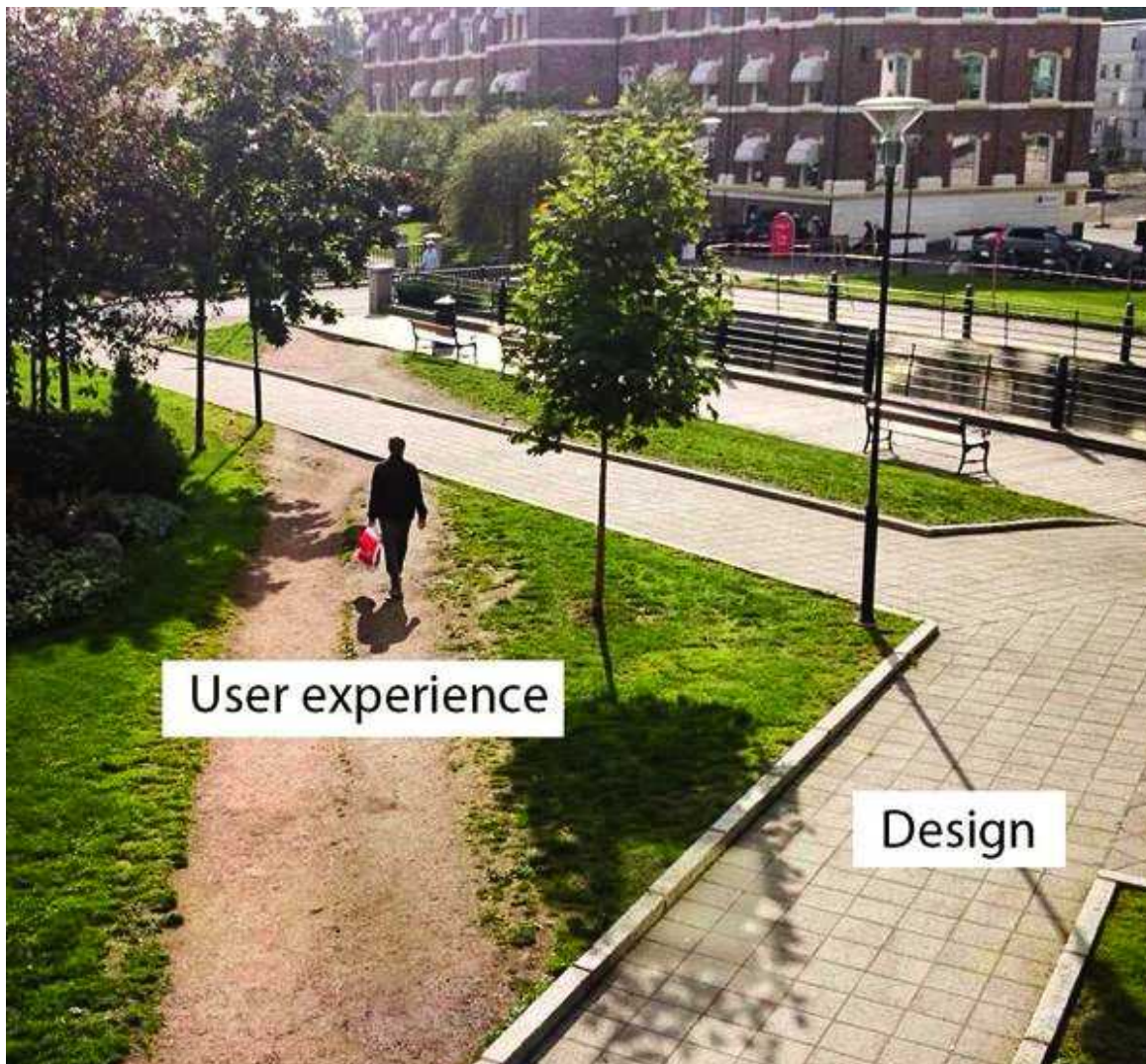
Success with product begins with people.

11. The industry is playing defense

In the last few years, media companies have been thrown against the ropes, suddenly playing more defense than offense. This is especially true of the news business, which is in the midst of its greatest disruption of all. This is a business that doesn't like to play defense.

So let's play offense. Swing bigger, invest more, experiment more, measure more. Accept that we don't know all the answers. If we believe the hard truths of mobile disruption, we'll double down on the challenge before us.

— Cory Bergman writes the *Mobile Media Memo*, and is the co-founder and GM of *Breaking News*, a mobile startup owned by NBC. This reflects his personal views, not necessarily those of NBC. He's @corybe on Twitter.





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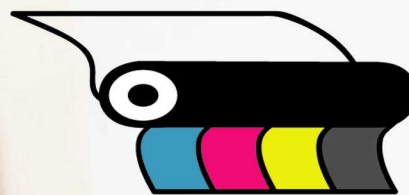
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By ALVIN LIM

5 reasons tech and media companies merge

The recent sale of South China Morning Post to tech company Alibaba Group may seem strange. But from a business perspective, the partnership of media and tech companies provides improved community building, monetization opportunities, and talent pools.



I am sure everyone in the news media industry has read about tech giant Alibaba Group's US\$266 million acquisition of the South China Morning Post (SCMP) Group by now.

The number seems big, but, putting things into perspective, Alibaba's market capitalization is more than US\$150 billion and its founder Jack Ma's fortune is estimated at US\$22.5 billion. Chump change.

While there were doomsayers who were pessimistic about the future of the editorial integrity and independence of the SCMP newspaper and other media assets, time will tell.

Mr. Ma himself said in an interview with The Wall Street Journal that there was no basis to think the SCMP would lose editorial independence while under the ownership of the e-commerce company he founded.

"Trust us. Why do people have to think that if we have it, it will lose its independence? Why not with others?" he asked. "We also read the newspapers. We also want media independence and fairness. What

basis is there that, with us, there will be no more independence?"

From a business perspective, I think the acquisition makes sense for both companies and may be the sign of more similar deals to come in the tech and news media space.

What are the synergies when a tech company acquires a news media company? Here are five advantages.

- 1. Better understanding of community building.** News media companies like SCMP that have a long editorial and readership history have a strong reputation and solid base of loyal readers to tap into to convert into engaged online communities. This is one area in which I find traditional news media companies particularly weak, while tech companies are particularly adept.
- 2. Better online monetization.** Maybe setting a paywall around your online subscription is not the way to go. Maybe there is a better way for news media monetization. If a news media company cannot figure it out, a tech company that

makes all its profits online has got to be able to figure this out.

- 3. Access to a captive audience.** This is similar to point one above. By acquiring a news media company like SCMP, it unlocks a large pool of loyal, committed readers for Alibaba. With better online data management and collection tools, this is a gold mine waiting to be unlocked.
- 4. Access to global platform/markets.** Most traditional news media companies tend to be geo-specific, operating only in fixed markets, thriving on hyper-local content. This might be linked to distribution channels and political landscapes for the printed editions. Tech companies, on the other hand, usually need to expand quickly across a large geographical area to tap into economies of scale. When you marry the two, the news media company can get a boost by tapping into a global platform and/or markets.
- 5. Melting pot for talent.** Having worked at both news media and tech companies, the talent pools are quite different and I believe each side can learn from the other. The news media industry and the tech space are converging, but no one really knows how it will pan out yet. It takes visionaries like Jack Ma to lead the way, and maybe this Alibaba-SCMP partnership is the trigger.

Author/Contact: Alvin Lim is the global head of content for migme in Singapore. He can be reached at alvinologist@gmail.com or @Alvinologist. His personal blog is Alvinology.com. This post is part of the Social Media blog on INMA.org.

— Reprinted from INMA

By LISA REIN

The pot business may be legal, but newspapers can't run ads for it, the U.S. Postal Service says



Newspapers can't advertise the Rookie Cookie if they want the U.S. Postal Service to deliver the paper (Brennan Linsley/Associated Press)

Newspapers in half the states are breaking the law if they mail publications containing ads for marijuana products — even though the states have legalized pot, the U.S. Postal Service said last week.

This parsing of federal law, released by postal officials as national policy after inquiries from Oregon's congressional delegation, is one of the messy consequences of the movement to legalize cannabis: It's bought, sold and advertised for recreational and medical use in some states, but still illegal under federal law.

The confusion started in Portland, Ore., where local newspapers have been running ads for dispensaries and manufacturers in the state's now-booming weed industry after voters legalized recreational pot for adults last year, following medical pot in 1998.

In November, Portland's postal district issued a memo to newspaper publishers, telling them they are breaking the law by running ads for pot and using the U.S. mail to deliver their papers.

The reason? The U.S. Postal Service is a federal entity. Even though Oregon, Washington, Colorado and Alaska have legalized recreational marijuana and 23 other states have legalized medical pot, any newspaper running ads in those states violates a federal law preventing advertising for illicit goods.

The advertising ban, first reported by the Bulletin of Bend, Oregon, prompted an angry letter to postal officials from most Democrats in the state's congressional delegation to figure out what was going on. Reps. Earl Blumenauer and Suzanne Bonamici and Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley accused the Postal Service in a joint statement of being rigid and said the agency should respect the voters' decision to legalize pot.

"We are working as a delegation to quickly find the best option to address this agency's intransigence," the four Democrats wrote, according to published reports. "Unfortunately, the outdated federal approach to marijuana as described in the response from the Postal Service



NOVEMBER 27, 2015

MAILPIECES CONTAINING ADVERTISEMENTS ABOUT MARIJUANA

If a mailpiece contains an advertisement for marijuana, that mailpiece is nonmailable as explained below:

Domestic Mail Manual (DMM) 601.9.4.1 restricts any advertising, promotional, or sales matter that solicits or induces the mailing of any article described in PUB 52 as hazardous, restricted, or perishable is nonmailable except that such matter relating to controlled substances, radioactive materials, restricted liquids and powders, battery-powered devices, odd-shaped items in envelopes, and switchblade and ballistic knives, as described in PUB 52, is mailable if it contains packaging instructions and any other mailing limitations under PUB 52, 508.9.0, and 508.10.0 (18 USC 1716).

- If an advertisement solicits the mailing of controlled substances such as marijuana, it would violate USPS mailing standards.
- Marijuana is classified as a Schedule I controlled substance in USC 21 812(c)(10).

USC 21 843(c) does make it unlawful to place an ad in any publication with the purpose of seeking or offering illegally to receive, buy, or distribute a Schedule I controlled substance. It does not include material which advocates the use of a similar material, which advocates a position or practice, and does not attempt to propose or facilitate an actual transaction.

- If an advertisement advocates the purchase of clinical marijuana through a Medical Marijuana Dispensary, it does not comply with USC 21 843(c).
- The authority for enforcing the Controlled Substances Act and implementing laws rests primarily with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) under the Department of Justice.

The USPS cooperates with all other agencies in preserving the laws of the United States.

Per Publication 52, Hazardous, Restricted, and Perishable Mail, 453.31 Controlled Substances, if the distribution of a controlled substance is unlawful under 21 U.S.C. 801 or any implementing regulation in 21 CFR 1300, then the mailing of the substance is also unlawful under 18 U.S.C. 1716. Controlled substances and drugs that contain controlled substances are acceptable in the domestic mail only under limited specified conditions.

If there are any questions regarding advertising marijuana through the mail, please call the Portland District Mailing Requirements Office at (503) 294-2417.

-- Portland District Mailing Requirements

undermines and threatens news publications that choose to accept advertising from legal marijuana businesses in Oregon and other states where voters also have freely decided to legalize marijuana.”

A top Postal Service wrote back last week.

“Based on our review of the [law], we have concluded that advertisements for the sale of marijuana are non-mailable,” wrote Thomas Marshall, USPS general counsel and executive vice president, according to published reports.

Marijuana is listed in the federal Controlled Substances Act like heroin and other drugs. It prohibits advertisements in “any newspaper, magazine, handbill, or other publications,” Marshall wrote.

“These provisions express Congress’s judgment that the mail should not be used as a means of transmitting advertisements for the sale of marijuana, even if that sale is allowed under state law,” he said.

But there’s a twist. The Postal Service apparently has no authority to stop the mailers if their publications contain pot ads. The new policy directs postmasters to send a report to the local U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the law enforcement arm of the Postal Service.

The matter would, in theory, then be turned over to a law enforcement agency for prosecution, although it’s unclear whether this kind of crime would be prosecuted. Federal authorities have generally not cracked down on pot sales in states where they’re legal.

The policy means that pot ads are off-limits to newspapers and other businesses that use the Postal Service to deliver papers, as well as direct-mail companies that to work with the cannabis industry on advertising.

Some local newspapers said the policy will cut into the bottom line of businesses struggling for revenue in the declining publishing industry.

“For our weekly in Washington state, Chinook Observer, it’s a large deal,” Steve Forrester, president and chief executive of the EO Media Group, which publishes the Observer, based in Long Beach, Wash., told the Bulletin this month. “They’re about a 6,000 circulation [paper]. Half of it goes through the mail, which is true of a lot of rural weeklies.”

Lisa Rein covers the federal workforce and issues that concern the management of government.

— Reprinted from *The Washington Post*

IMPORTANT REMINDER FOR NEWSPAPERS:

New York State’s General Business Law requires the following:

Every newspaper, magazine or other periodical published in NY must publish in every issue, on the editorial page or on one of the first four pages, the full name and address of the owner(s), or if owned by a corporation, the name of the corporation and the address of its principal place of business, together with the full names of the president, secretary and treasurer.

Failure to publish this information in every issue is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine calculated per issue in non-compliance.

Want to make some easy money?

Encourage your sales staff to sell into NYPS’s statewide classified advertising network (NYSCAN).

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By RICK KARLIN

State pension fund sees gain in helping business

Comptroller unveils a loan plan for small, medium operations



Photos by Cindy Schultz / Times Union

Comptroller Tom DiNapoli, left, and Dave Helgerson, managing director of Hamilton Lane, a private equity investment firm, unveil a program to offer credit for state-based small and medium-size businesses on Tuesday in Albany.

Comptroller Tom DiNapoli rolled out a program Tuesday providing up to \$200 million for loans to growing small-to-midsize businesses in New York.

The idea behind the New York Credit Small Business Investment Company is to help companies that are too small or growing too quickly to get traditional bank loans. The state public employee pension fund is committing \$50 million to the program, which will leverage another \$36 million from banks and money from the federal Small Business Administration to create the \$200 million fund.



Dave Helgerson of Hamilton Lane, right, and Comptroller Tom DiNapoli say the program will help businesses in the state get funding

DiNapoli said major banks, which have grown cautious and more risk-averse since the 2008 financial crash, are often hesitant to lend money to some companies, such as those with revenues between \$5 million and \$50 million, or those with little collateral.

“Many businesses find they keep getting turned down,” DiNapoli said, adding “we see a real need and we also see a real opportunity.”

The program will work with Hamilton Lane, a private equity investment firm that does a lot of work with public pensions.

Also investing are TDBank, Bank of NY Mellon, HSBCBank, DeutscheBank and First Niagara Bank.

David Helgerson, a managing director at Hamilton Lane, said they aim to earn low double-digit returns on the loans, which likely will carry interest rates between 8 and 13 percent.

The loans could go to companies such as distributors, small manufacturers, software producers and even financial services firms.

The loans will be available to companies across the state, Helgerson said, adding, “there are good investments and good companies everywhere.”

The \$184.5 billion pension fund offers a number of programs for New York firms. They help fund the New York Business Development Corporation Partnership, which also makes loans to small businesses for equipment, real property or working capital.

Most of the money will go out in loans but in some cases, the fund may take equity positions in companies where they are lenders.

— Reprinted from Times Union

rkarkin@timesunion.com?
518-454-5758 @RickKarlinTU

By PAUL GRONDAHL

Metroland's last issue is a guerrilla finale

Metroland staffers put out a guerrilla final issue online on New Year's Eve, "The Last Stand" went out on their own terms a clenched fist of protest a lump in the throat over fun times gone by and a middle finger raised at The Establishment.

Nobody got paid.

Staff reminiscences were infused with an incomparable sense of freedom nurtured at the alt-weekly. F-bombs were not censored from stories. A brawl broke out over the proper spelling of doughnuts. The newsroom crew was described as "that pack of cranky, loud-mouthed opinionated misfits" by former news editor Chet Hardin.

The cathartic final edition — published at www.metroland.net — was an attempt to wash away the sour taste left in their mouths after Metroland ceased print publication on Nov. 5 after 38 years due to deep financial troubles, nonpayment of taxes and seizure of its Washington Avenue offices by state tax officials.

Even when paychecks bounced, a resident rodent ("MetroMouse") forced the skittish to keep feet curled up on chairs as they wrote and frequent moves to cheaper office space turned them into refugees, the ever-shrinking staff kept putting out the 40,000-circulation free newspaper every Thursday. Like their lives depended on it.

"As a student of media, it was the craziest thing I'd ever seen," said Erin Pihlaja, news editor from 2012 to 2014, an era when Metroland was a ship listing heavily.

"There was something truly possessive and they kept writing and writing for it even when they weren't getting paid," said Pihlaja, now executive director of the Troy Business Improvement District. "They felt an obligation and didn't want it to die."

The online send-off was cooked up by arts editor Shawn Stone and longtime restaurant critic Byron Nilsson.

"It was kind of awistful, lovely goodbye," said Nilsson, who lives on a farm outside Montgomery County where he is a beekeeper, playwright and aspiring novelist. The fact that he was still owed money seemed beside the point.



Times Union archive

Steve Leon, front center, poses with some members of the Metroland staff as they hold copies of past issues as part of a celebration for the weekly's 30th anniversary in 2009.

"It was one of the best experiences I ever had as a journalist," said Darryl McGrath, a Columbia University Journalism School graduate who taught journalism at the University at Albany. She also worked at the Times Union and published articles in the New York Times and Boston Globe.

She credited editor and publisher Stephen Leon and her late husband, Jim McGrath, a former Times Union editorial pagewriter, with taking her writing to a higher level, including a flinty profile on Albany Mayor Jerry Jennings and an investigation into controversial searches and seizures by Border Patrol agents seeking undocumented farm workers on Amtrak trains.

"People loved Metroland and feared it and I'm sorry it's gone," said McGrath, whose book about bird enthusiasts, "Flight Paths," will be published next month by SUNY Press.

"It was a wonderful privilege to dive deep on stories and bring attention to issues nobody else was writing about," said Miriam Axel-Lute, former news editor and columnist who now edits Shelterforce magazine. "The newsroom was a buzzy mix of earnestness and wackiness."

Metroland began as an advertising platform for Cahoots, Sneaky Pete's and other disco-era nightclubs when 23-year-old Peter Iselin started it in 1978 with a popular feature called "Fox of the Month." He sold it for about \$200,000 in 1995 to Leon and family members who were investors.

"Steve did a great job with it journalistically and it got better after I sold it," said Iselin, who works in music licensing and lives locally after 13 years in Los Angeles.

He recalled Jimmy Fallon, host of "The Tonight Show," working as a receptionist and playing on the softball team

and talented alumni like photographer Scott Gries and writer Mike Goudreau, who both moved to New York City to photograph celebrities and write for VH1, respectively.

"I think it was remarkable that Steve kept the place going as long as he did. It was his baby," said Paul Rapp, an attorney and member of the pop band Blotto who wrote for Metroland since 1991.

Leon, 57, who joined Metroland in 1986, did not return calls and emails seeking comment. He told the Times Union in November that Metroland had been in decline since the 2008 recession and called its demise "a long time coming."

A familiar cascade of events — notably a catastrophic loss of classified ads to the free online Craigslist — also caused the Boston Phoenix, San Francisco Bay Guardian and other alt-weeklies to shut down.



Production workers review layouts on a computer in the Metroland offices in Albany in 2009.

"We had a great run, we held our heads up high and we have no regrets," said Ted Etoll, senior account executive who joined Metroland in 1989. He ended up losing money through unpaid loans, but credited Metroland with helping him build a career as a music promoter who owns StepUp Presents and runs Upstate Concert Hall in Clifton Park.

"We did it because we loved it," he said.

— Reprinted from the Times Union

That paper celebrates 173 years of service the community, but the paper's lineage includes the first newspaper ever published in the Finger Lakes, The Steuben and Allegany Patriot, which was founded in 1816 — a mere 200 years ago!

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Greetings from the N. Y. State Press

N. Y. State Press Association

Syracuse, N. Y.

Office of the President

June 18, 1943

Mr. Henry O. Elkins,
Editor Steuben Courier
Bath, New York.

Dear Mr. Elkins:

The New York State Press Association is proud of the record you have made as editor-publisher for fifty years and is happy to join in marking a century of service rendered by your splendid newspaper.

It is just such a record as one would expect to find in Bath—cynosure of early pioneers, scene of the first world's fair, and home of the first newspaper published in the Finger Lakes Region of the historic Genesee country.

In the midst of the uncertainties and difficulties of these years, I think we may definitely gain a more constructive and optimistic view of life both for the present and the future by pausing briefly to recall that our forbears in this community were hewing from the forests a new world following their successful fight for freedom. A newspaper would indeed be false to the faith of the fourth estate did it not endeavor to push forward and pass on, more brightly burning, the torch of liberty.

I am indeed happy to take this opportunity of recognizing in behalf of your fellow publishers in New York State the spirit of service which marks your editorship. It has been a source of inspiration to many of us. We join your community in honoring you and your paper for your significant contribution.

Sincerely,
SIDNEY E. AYRES, President,
New York Press Association.



Columbia-Greene Media's sports project

With the Register-Star turning 230 years old the sports staff at Columbia-Greene Media wanted to create a sports-related project that showcased the local talent that has come through the area and decided on doing a Top 25 Athletes to Ever Come Out of Columbia County list.

The sports department developed a list of roughly 100 candidates, narrowed it down to 25 and ranked them. The final group included an Olympian, NFL, MLB and NBA players, a women's baseball player who is in the Hall of Fame and many college athletes who still hold high school and collegiate records. Some are well known in the community while others have been forgotten about over time. The sports staff divided up the list and wrote stories ranging from 600-1,000 words on each athlete's career. Prior to its debut, a strip ad was

run on the front page of the paper and it was teased to on Facebook and Twitter.

Starting with No. 25, we released one story per day until unveiling No. 1 with the project spanning from Nov. 27 to Jan. 2. From the start, community engagement was phenomenal with phone calls, emails, texts, Facebook messages and faxes coming in from people both local and as far away as Florida, either asking who was No. 1; advocating for a parent, sibling, child or former teammate; or just saying they enjoyed arguing with friends over who they had in their own Top 5.

Once rolling, the project didn't require any additional marketing or promotion. It took on a life of its own with word of mouth being a driving force behind its popularity. Daily Facebook posts of each story were picked up and shared widely.

Research was the most time consuming effort related to the project — the sports staff dug through physical archives, microfilm and the internet. They also contacted colleges and professional teams for additional stats, information and photos.

All in all, we began this project at the beginning of November and wrapped on Jan. 2. The stories are still picking up hits on the website (nearing 30,000) and are still being shared on Facebook (reaching more than 75,000 people). It all culminated with the creation of a 2-sided poster that contains photos of the Top 25 on the front and info for each athlete on the back, which we plan on selling and sharing the profits with a local sports charity.

See the full list at:
www.registerstar.com/sports/top_25

Bob Parks retires from Plattsburgh Press-Republican

Bob Parks, longtime publisher of the Plattsburgh Press-Republican is retiring after a four-decade career in the newspaper business.

Parks, 65, has served as publisher of the paper since 2000, leading it smartly into the digital era by introducing website and mobile-phone platforms that have attracted an audience from throughout the North Country and beyond.

"I am retiring from a very good newspaper," Parks said.

"The Press-Republican serves a great community in print and online, and that's a tribute to the dedicated staff, who take their mission to heart to serve the community every day."

Parks began his newspaper career more than 40 years ago as editor of his college newspaper at Mercyhurst University in Erie, Pa., his hometown.

His first professional job after college was sales representative for The Herald in Sharon, Pa., in 1975.

He later served in executive roles, including general manager and publisher, with other newspapers in Pennsylvania, New York, North Carolina, Kentucky and Connecticut.

Twenty-five of those years were spent with the former Ottaway Newspapers.

During his time at the Press-Republican, Parks served as a director on the NYPA board.

Parks described the Press-Republican's comprehensive coverage of the Dannemora prison break by two convicted killers in June 2015 as one of his proudest times as publisher.

The daring escape had the Plattsburgh area on edge for 23 days before Richard Matt was shot to death and David Sweat was shot and captured.

"It was a highlight of my career, without a doubt," said Parks. "The entire staff came together and produced print and online coverage that kept people informed throughout the ordeal."



"We provided essential and trustworthy journalism for a shaken community."

"It made me extremely proud of our role as the local newspaper and the most reliable source on what quickly became a national story."

Over the decades, Parks said, he has striven to "hold true to producing every day a newspaper that provides local information and editorials that are useful to readers. As long as newspapers continue to do that, they will continue to thrive."

Parks said he and his wife, Linda, plan to continue to live in Plattsburgh and stay active in community affairs.

NYPA Internship Program Celebrates 20th Anniversary

Launched in 1996, the NYPA Foundation's paid summer internship program was established to invest in the future of community journalism by offering paid summer internships to outstanding students. During the past 20 years the Foundation has invested more than \$600,000 to fund 210 internships.

Our intention then, was the same as it is now: to introduce outstanding students to potential careers in community journalism. Two decades into this amazing program, a large number of intern alumni have pursued careers in journalism and we have invited several of them to be guests at NYPA's spring convention next April, where they will share the stories of their career trajectory.

The students aren't the only beneficiaries — interns provide much needed staffing during busy summer vacation periods.

In its 20th year, the internship program continues to provide remarkable work experiences for interns and a tangible impact on the future of journalism.

There are several ways you can support NYPA's internship program. You may elect to add the amount to your dues payment, or make your contribution through "GoFundMe" which you can find the link on our site at www.nynewspapers.com.

This issue of 'NewBeat' was printed by



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www.nynewspapers.com



job bank

Inside Sales Representative *full-time*

Columbia-Greene Media, publisher of the Register-Star in Hudson and the Daily Mail in Catskill, is looking for a full-time inside sales representative to join our team. Core responsibilities include providing support to retail sales reps by preparing sales pipelines, providing research on and setting appointments with prospective advertisers, coordination with the ad composition team, and performing outbound sales calls.

Excellent entry-level position for those looking to make a name for themselves in sales, and learn from the ground up. Lots of potential for upward mobility.

Previous sales experience not required, but the ideal candidate has excellent communication skills, is adept at managing multiple projects concurrently, and must be proficient with word processors and spreadsheet software. Design skills, basic HTML/CSS, and project management experience is a big plus. Familiarity with the businesses and communities in Dutchess, Columbia, Greene, and southern Albany county is also a major asset.

This is a full-time 9-5 position based out of our Hudson office, salary + commission, with benefits. The position reports directly to the Sales Manager.



If interested in the position please send a cover letter, resume and references to Tammi Ullrich

Tammi Ullrich
Columbia-Greene Media
Personnel Administrator
One Hudson City Centre, Suite 202
Hudson, NY 12534

or via email to
cgmjobs@registerstar.com
No phone calls please.

Journalists Wanted

Get your journalism/reporting career started at Columbia-Greene Media.

Start here, go anywhere!

Reporters who have gotten their start at CGM have bylines now appearing in a number of publications throughout the Northeast.

Columbia-Greene Media is currently seeking reporters to join a team of journalists working on the cutting edge of news coverage in the Hudson Valley's Columbia, Greene and Dutchess counties. If you're looking to spend your workdays covering municipal and school board meetings, followed by churning out meeting stories, then this isn't the job for you. The editorial team is focused on multimedia, issue-based and investigative journalism that covers topics important to our readers, both online and in print. Our offices are in Hudson, Catskill and Red Hook.

The reporter will focus on multimedia (video/ social media/livestream radio) news, feature and business storytelling, always immediately for the Web, and must be prepared for breaking news and meeting daily deadlines.

A degree in the field of communications, writing or English is preferred. Writing experience a plus. Candidates should have technological aptitude and a knowledge of social media. Photography and videography are required.

Columbia-Greene Media is growing and has added a magazine division, a new weekly publication and livestream radio to its existing two daily and five weekly newspapers over the past 18 months.

Benefits package includes health, dental and vacation. Submit a resume, cover letter and at least two writing samples to Columbia-Greene Media personnel administrator, One Hudson City Centre, Suite 202, Hudson, NY 12534, or via email: cgmjobs@registerstar.com. No phone calls please.

