Shaking it up: matrix teams
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LISA MACLEOD | INTRODUCTION

• Head of Digital at Tiso Blackstar Group
• Running digital strategy and management
• Former General Manager Digital Publishing at 24.com / Media 24
• Head of Operations FT.com, Managing Editor at the Financial Times in London
• Focused on newsroom integration and change management
• Board member of the World Editors Forum
• Vice President WAN-IFRA
• BA Honours in Anthropology
SOUTH AFRICA | CONTEXT

- Newspaper declining: dailies 16% year on year decline
- High penetration of mobile phones but smartphone does not mean internet access is a given
- Android far outweighs IOS
- Data costs are enormously high: 6 x higher than Egypt - spectrum and infrastructure, lack of competition
- South Africans spend more on communication than on health or on education
TISO BLACKSTAR | INTRODUCTION

- Publish 8 newspapers, magazines, 14 websites, radio stations throughout Africa (Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria), run a film and music distribution business and an events company
- Big investment in alternative revenue streams: tech, events etc
- Work hard to optimise print business
- Embarking on a complete overhaul of workflows and processes to favour a digital-first environment in all newsrooms: Innovation Media
Aim: to change our newsrooms to become digital facing and responsive to audience needs, rather than medium-driven.

Note: already relocated to a new building with a massive open plan newsroom.

Also running an internal wire to foster collaboration between 8 newsrooms: 200+ stories a day filed for group use.

Involves three pillars:

1. New newsroom tech including a new custom built CMS called CosMoS and an upgraded print system (Good News 4 / Tera).
3. Improving print processes and efficiencies to ensure sustainability.
STRATEGY I 2014 - 2017

Areas of focus:

• Product, audience development and multimedia

Strategy:

• To fix broken and unstable **TECH**, and build solid, scalable platforms for the digital business (replatformed 12 sites)
• To entrench strong **PRINT** brands online with excellent journalism from papers starting life digitally
• To **CONSOLIDATE** and make digital a sustainable business with growing revenue: focus on paid content
• To **DIVERSIFY** revenue as much as possible: can’t stand still!
• 1. Audience first: bring together the right **PEOPLE** to gather data and intelligence on all users of our brands and channels and understand their movements, needs and likes. Build the richest audience data in SA
• 2. Improve **PROCESSES** and skills across departments (ads, circ, product and editorial) to manage, service, communicate with and monetise readers wherever we find them
• 3. Build new **PRODUCTS** based on audience intelligence and market demand, and refine existing products to enhance engagement and revenue
• 4. Measure our **PERFORMANCE**: defined as growing audiences, raising revenue, improving retention + engagement.
Audience Development
Circulation
Product Development
Editorial
Marketing and Research
Sales

Matrix team cuts across corporate structures
**Definition:** the practice of managing individuals with more than one reporting line (in a matrix organisation structure),

- Also commonly used to describe managing cross-functional, cross-business group teams.
- Divisional managers are responsible for more than one area and employees report to both their immediate manager and a cross-function leader on certain project streams.
- Agile, highly specialised project teams can be brought together to maximise quality and revenue on products.
- Difficulty: getting time from people, reporting lines blurred, good for drivers, not good for passengers
• Aim: to cut across silos and work more effectively on revenue-bearing projects
• Selection of staff from different departments
• Teams focused on reader revenue, subscriptions, native advertising, and alternate revenue
• Very new: looks promising
AN EXAMPLE | READER REVENUE

**Audience and data**

- Lisa MacLeod, Head of Digital
  - New Hire: Digital Marketing Lead
  - New Hire: Commercial Data Analyst
  - Digital Audience Analyst
  - Ad Ops (Advertising)

**Customer management**

- Circulation
- Consumer Marketing
- Head of Product
  - Editorial Content Director

**Product innovation**

- Head of Product
  - Editorial Content Director

**Product development**

- Head of Product
  - Development Team, Design and UX

**Audience Engagement / Editorial**

- Amplify Editor
- Litt Team

- Build new and refactor older products

- Report on performance, distribute products

- Provide insights
- Identify problems and opportunities

- Feed to product council, write requirements for new product
AN EXAMPLE | NATIVE REVENUE

**Audience and data**
- Audience and data science team

**Sales**
- Print and digital sales teams

**Print**
- Managing editor: surveys
- Production editor: surveys
- Layout artist/designer: surveys

**Digital production**
- Native Content Editor

**Co-operate and collaborate**

**Reporting**
- Audience analysts (commercial and editorial)

**Marketing + Events**
- Trade and consumer marketing team
- Events management team

**Multimedia**
- Head of Multimedia

**Provides input, help, production of content**

**Audience and brand extension opportunities**
REVENUE | FOCUS ON THE FUNNEL

TOP: Track
- All about BRAND PRESENCE
- Cross device tagging and tracking implemented
- Traffic improvement measures
- SEO improvements
- Tech optimisations: Marfeel and AMP
- Tagging consolidated
- LR Team: viral stories
- Editorial volume and speed
- Social sharing, pixel tracking and page likes
- Brand presence and awareness: external marketing

MIDDLE: Profile
- All about ACQUISITION
- Gather data on consumption and behavior
- Profile segments / personas
- Work on demographics, personalisation, transactions etc
- Internal marketing: banners and offers personalised
- Personalised content recommendations to increase engagement and time spent on product
- Targeted on-site banners and email marketing
- Push notifications
- Push to sale / call to action marketing

BOTTOM: Engage + Monetise
- All about RETENTION
- Effort is aimed at engagement, and superior customer service and experience
- Reach / Frequency / Volume metrics – engagement metrics
- User journeys, renewals and churn managed meticulously
- Loyal customer programmes
- Underpinned by data, active CRM and bespoke marketing
- Corporate sales and B2B marketing
REVENUE | COVER PRICE

• Paid content is primary focus
• 3 operational paywalls
• All have different business models
• One is defensive (protect print revenues) - Sunday Times
• One is niche business content (high end readers) - BusinessLIVE
• One is a digital daily edition (new concept, print replacement for closed newspaper The Times) - Times Select
• Supported by new data team
• Necessity is the mother of invention (resource constraints)
• Not rocket science: just people pulling together in a different way for a specific outcome - Gallup research 84% of US employees “matrixed” in some way
• All doing their normal jobs: what has changed is the end-goal
• Trying to focus on wealth creation rather than cost-cutting
• Teams have a clear revenue goal, or goals that bring revenue
• Monthly reporting to the senior management committee
• Changed meeting structure across the company: more focused
• Project-focused. Introducing Agile as a concept
• Example: Project Reclaim - get back missing subs
FINISH

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