Newsroom 2020

The future holds no guarantees

Steve Yelvington

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These are the good old days
Where we’re coming from: A factory for making newspapers

Specialization
Standardization
Writing, editing, photography, layout
Daily deadline cycle
Focus on print medium

Ford assembly line, early 20th century
We’ve scaled and automated the same processes
Or we’ve downscaled
... in a declining business
To survive, we need substantive change
Yes, reporters need multiple skills. Writing. Photography. Video. Data journalism. Or better yet, the ability to collaborate with others.
The reporter-writer in 2020

Mobile, not office-bound
Basic photography (all posts need photos)
Basic videography and editing
Basic audio and editing
Basic social media monitoring and marketing
Works with specialists on a project basis
Works with specialists on a daily basis
Any customer can have a car painted any color that he wants so long as it is black.

-- Henry Ford
A car for every purse and purpose

-- Alfred P. Sloan, General Motors
To survive, we need a portfolio of specialized products.
And the newsroom has to participate.
Production efficiency vs. Creative capability
Accuracy, accuracy, accuracy vs. Fail fast, Fail often, innovate
Print production outsourced to a design center

Gatehouse Media design center, Austin TX
Centralization advantages ... and disadvantages

Economies of scale
  Lower cost per page
Quality of design work
Flexibility in scheduling
Loss of local knowledge
Loss of local control
Loss of flexibility in scheduling
When print is out of sight, digital products can become the primary focus.
The new newsroom is a creative studio
With a collection of diverse skills

- Product development
- Product management
- Project management
- Collaboration within the news organization
- Collaboration with the business side
- Experimentation and measurement
But don’t imagine that specialization is gone

- User interface and user experience design
- Data journalism
- Data analysis for business, audience management
- Graphic design
- High-end photography, especially sports
- Social media marketing and promotion
- Video production optimized for social distribution
Social optimization: Square video for Facebook
Audio is totally optional

Identification >>

Carmen Yulín Cruz Soto
MAYOR OF SAN JUAN

What kind of a person gives themselves a grade

<< Captioning
<< Branding
Appropriate training for each role

- Reporters
- Photographers
- Editors
- Web/digital producers
- Social media managers
- Product managers
- Product developers and programmers
- Data journalists
- User interface designers
- User experience designers
- Usability testers
...
Innovation culture and organizational structure

Create a culture of continuous change and reinvention

Drive change with clarity of strategic vision and strategic planning

Foster a willingness to experiment and take risks

Impose measurement discipline -- and be careful what you measure

Insulate creative projects from the pressures of news deadlines
Continuous creation
Continuous measurement
Continuous destruction
The breakthrough innovations come when the tension is greatest and the resources are most limited.

That's when people are actually a lot more open to rethinking the fundamental way they do business.

Clayton M. Christensen