



ASNE/API Training and Development Survey July 2011

CONTENT AND AUDIENCE CHALLENGES

| | Not at all important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important | Rating Average (1-4) |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Improve ability to provide hyperlocal coverage, regardless of platform. | 5.5% | 17.3% | 36.4% | 40.9% | 3.13 |
| Launch profitable new niche products, both print and digital. | 4.5% | 25.2% | 36.0% | 34.2% | 3.00 |
| Exploit mobile opportunities as a way of distributing content and building audience. | 2.7% | 12.6% | 32.4% | 52.3% | 3.34 |
| Develop content-sharing strategies with other news organizations. | 8.1% | 29.7% | 36.9% | 25.2% | 2.79 |
| Research and experiment with content for which consumers might be willing to pay. | 1.8% | 21.8% | 32.7% | 43.6% | 3.18 |
| Redefine roles, strategies and tactics for moving newsrooms from once-a-day print publishing to continuously updated "24/7" news and information. | 5.4% | 12.6% | 27.0% | 55.0% | 3.32 |
| Maintain quality writing and editing, despite budget and staffing cuts. | 1.8% | 1.8% | 12.6% | 83.8% | 3.78 |
| Develop new audiences through new kinds of content beyond traditional "news." | 2.7% | 26.1% | 37.8% | 33.3% | 3.02 |
| Integrating social media for news content and distribution. | 0.9% | 15.3% | 40.5% | 43.2% | 3.26 |
| Develop online video and other interactive features for news websites. | 7.3% | 27.3% | 47.3% | 18.2% | 2.76 |
| Redesign and improve newspaper websites. | 7.2% | 16.2% | 39.6% | 36.9% | 3.06 |
| Create compelling, "must-read" local news blogs. | 10.8% | 36.9% | 37.8% | 14.4% | 2.56 |
| Develop interactive databases to provide valuable content and generate revenue. | 7.2% | 23.4% | 49.5% | 19.8% | 2.82 |
| Develop and execute a mobile strategy. | 3.6% | 10.0% | 31.8% | 54.5% | 3.37 |
| Other challenges or opportunities related to content and audience. | 11.4% | 25.3% | 32.9% | 30.4% | 2.82 |

Other content and audience challenges:

- ▶ Note that "redefine roles...from once-a-day... to continuously updated 24/7" (above) is something already done. A lot of this, in fact, is work in progress, so that a top priority one month becomes secondary the next as you progress from one "most important" to the next. I'm tempted to make almost everything on the list "very important," which suggests the scale of the challenge today.
- ▶ managing comments. should they be anonymous? how to monitor? when are we at risk of libel?
- ▶ Investing cold hard cash into digital. Can't get there on the cheap or with legacy technology. Need wholesale reconsideration of technology as it is the core of everything we do.
- ▶ It's time for newsrooms to focus on finding ways to do fewer things well, instead of doing everything poorly
- ▶ Continue to provide watchdog journalism for our local area.
- ▶ Consider strongly the opportunity to partner with local NPR/PBS stations
- ▶ We are in a constant battle with trolls in our online commenting section.
- ▶ Addressing the needs of the Spanish-language population in our community
- ▶ Train traditionalists in the new ways of delivering news and information.
- ▶ Continue emphasizing a Web-first strategy on breaking news and adding databases, such as local government salaries throughout our coverage area and mugshots of suspected criminals.
- ▶ Providing more content with less staff
- ▶ Do all of the above plus maintain a high-quality print newspaper for loyal print readers with fewer and fewer resources.
- ▶ Motivating the news staff in times of layoffs and budget decisions that are gutting news operations.
- ▶ Many of the items noted above we have already done. They are still important but we are in the middle of executing on those plans. I mark them as important or somewhat important but the majority have been tackled. The upcoming challenge for us is an iPad strategy to launch in March and how to present a magazine format for the 7 to 11 p.m. crowd with existing resources.
- ▶ Content sharing with other news orgs is very important, but we've already done it
- ▶ Develop marketing that will distinguish the differences in our products - print, online, mobile, e-edition and iPad.
- ▶ Continue to find new opportunities to enhance the Sunday paper, capitalizing on that one day of the week when "not having the time" for a newspaper is a less valid argument for potential readers. We need to make our Sunday product so compelling that readers will feel they must find time.
- ▶ The platform doesn't matter so much as the content does. Content -- exclusive, high-quality content -- drives readers to any platform, on paper or online.
- ▶ I marked virtually all of these initiatives as "very important," and newsroom cuts present an almost overwhelming challenge to accomplish them. That, and lack of expertise or training opportunities on the staff. To drill down a little more, the initiatives all require managerial time that has become very dear as managers have taken on more responsibilities in order to keep front line news gatherers on the front line.
- ▶ Starting my own news and information, multimedia company.
- ▶ Maintaining credibility despite the rumor, innuendo and outright gossip found in cyberspace -- even from once credible news outlets.

Other content and audience challenges ... continued

- ▶ We have a demographic that's made up largely of retirees. Our challenge is to familiarize them with smartphones and other technology beyond the print product, which many still prefer.
- ▶ Increase Web users by promoting Web site as a community portal to gain interactive participation that in turn improves advertiser participation and results.
- ▶ Develop compelling content people are willing to pay for; Attracting and retain people with the right skill sets;
- ▶ Surviving-and thriving-in a depressed local economy, while at the same time dealing with technology changes, etc.

- ▶ Platforms to carry content in ways readers want them are important - critically important - but equally important is improving and expanding, rather than maintaining, core journalism, particularly compelling, revelatory watchdog and other enterprise that distinguishes local newsrooms from all the commodity and aggregated content out there. If we don't work on this, we will die. To be sure, we need to figure better, more consistent ways to share this content with readers on all platforms, including making it interactive. But at the core of all that we do is high quality enterprise journalism, particularly watchdog.
- ▶ They just don't get anything except the bottom line
- ▶ General lack of interest in the kinds of things we have traditionally done.
- ▶ With cuts in staff, 24/7 is an impossible task that brings in few returns. My challenge is casting off that which consumes essential time for benefits that have less weight. I want to create a pm newspaper for an am cycle. Altering mindset for print has been a fascinating journey. My perspective for print and online is that news of yesterday is dead. We are focused on the news of now with online and the news of news of experience in print. I want quality over quantity. Trying to force everyone to be a jill of all trades diminishes quality.

- ▶ Staff retention
- ▶ Change perception of audience about what kinds of information we can reliably deliver.

LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

| | Not at all important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important | Rating Average (1-4) |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Create, communicate and generate buy-in for vision/strategies. | 4.8% | 21.9% | 42.9% | 30.5% | 2.99 |
| Balance short-term vs. long-term actions/initiatives/expectations. | 2.8% | 19.8% | 50.0% | 27.4% | 3.02 |
| Find, recruit and retain a technology-savvy, diverse work force. | 4.7% | 14.0% | 43.9% | 37.4% | 3.14 |
| Prepare new and future newsroom leaders. | 2.8% | 17.8% | 37.4% | 42.1% | 3.19 |
| Provide training for managers who are new to the requirements and responsibilities of supervising both print and digital enterprises. | 4.7% | 24.3% | 32.7% | 38.3% | 3.05 |
| Provide assistance/training to help staff and managers prioritize and balance multiple initiatives. | 4.7% | 22.6% | 38.7% | 34.0% | 3.02 |
| Other challenges or opportunities related to leadership and development. | 14.1% | 32.8% | 29.7% | 23.4% | 2.63 |

Other leadership and development challenges:

- ▶ Maintain enthusiasm and energy of newsroom workforce in the face of an onslaught of negative developments (such as continuing revenue declines and resulting budget cuts) and resource shortages, including pay freezes and cuts. It's essential that we underscore the value of journalism and offer reinforcement to those who are enabling us to move forward in very difficult days.
- ▶ training seems to have gone away from traditional newsroom management, as though with all the new Web responsibilities editors no longer need firm grounding on motivating staff, developing news judgment, managing complex stories, ethics etc.
- ▶ In many newsrooms, Guild members have been trying to advance training plans for years, and managers are extremely resistant. This is a huge mistake: When employees know they need new skills and are actively seeking out ways to obtain them at little or no cost, it makes no sense to block their efforts. At very worst, you'll end up with a re-energized staff thinking in new ways about the news business. At best, you'll develop skills among your staff that are critical to moving into new forms of content production and distribution. We're all in this same leaky boat together and it's time to let go of our old ideas about labor and management. We all need to start building a new ship -- and fast.
- ▶ Our most experienced journalists have skills of an era passing by; our most knowledgeable when it comes to technology and new ways of reaching audiences have the least experience with the subjects they cover.
- ▶ Working with fewer resources: less money, less people
Learning and teaching others how best to manage change
- ▶ Retention of talent in the era of budget cuts, furloughs and layoffs.
- ▶ Continue to help managers lead change during difficult times

Other leadership and development challenges ... continued

- ▶ With a veteran staff in a union newsroom and the economic situation, there will be little or no opportunity in the near future to find and recruit a technology-savvy, diverse workforce.
- ▶ Finding ways to move people up in the organization without having to worry about bean-counters deciding that the next round of layoffs will take any position that was not on the organizational chart as of a certain date. Yes, that has happened.
- ▶ Get corporate support for pushing staff development.
- ▶ Corporate powers need to understand that one size does not fit all. All markets are different and we all need to experiment with our products.
- ▶ Of course the answer to these questions is "very important." That would be like doing a reader survey and asking, "Would you like more local news?" Obviously, they would. The question is, how to pull it off.
- ▶ Figure out how my journalism skills and management training will best transfer to an entrepreneurial environment.
- ▶ Finding good reporters/other staff with skills necessary despite lack of large pool of qualified applicants.
- ▶ Create or maintain ownership buy-in and involvement in vision/swstrategies.
- ▶ develop high quality training beyond the elite employees
- ▶ This may be under the preparing leaders category, but an important part of leadership is finding the best ways to develop the talents of your people, to create an environment where folks feel like they can learn and grow. Also, change management. Change has always been a part of vibrant organizations, but never more than now and into the future. Focus on rapid change management, because few things happen slowly any more.
- ▶ All the above are important because we don't have a clear enough idea of our long term direction. If we were to settle on one prioritizing training/development needs would be easier.
- ▶ The biggest obstacle we face is bringing youngsters into the business. There is no movement on my staff unless through a pink slip. We have a mature and experienced staff. I am lucky that way. But we are not bringing new and less experienced people. I am concerned for all those college kids out there who cannot find jobs. As an industry, we need to find a way to keep them in the fold.

ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION CHALLENGES

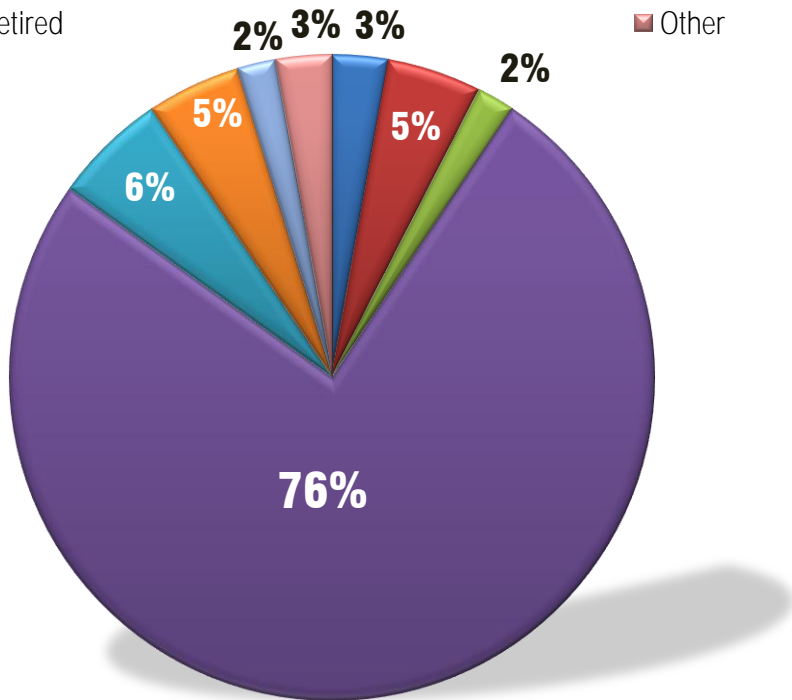
| | Not at all important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important | Rating Average (1-4) |
|--|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Redesign work processes and organizational structure to improve productivity and align with new staffing and resource realities. | 1.9% | 19.8% | 39.6% | 38.7% | 3.15 |
| Develop a strategic-planning process to set new business development priorities; then buy, build or partner for the solutions. | 7.6% | 26.7% | 39.0% | 26.7% | 2.85 |
| Increase use of freelancers and/or 3rd party vendors for functions ranging from routine information-gathering in the news department to page design. | 16.0% | 41.5% | 29.2% | 13.2% | 2.40 |
| Develop strategies to centralize, consolidate or outsource newsroom functions, such as copy desk, pagination, etc. | 33.7% | 26.0% | 26.0% | 14.4% | 2.21 |
| Other challenges or opportunities related to organization and operations. | 16.1% | 41.1% | 28.6% | 14.3% | 2.41 |

Other organization and operation challenges:

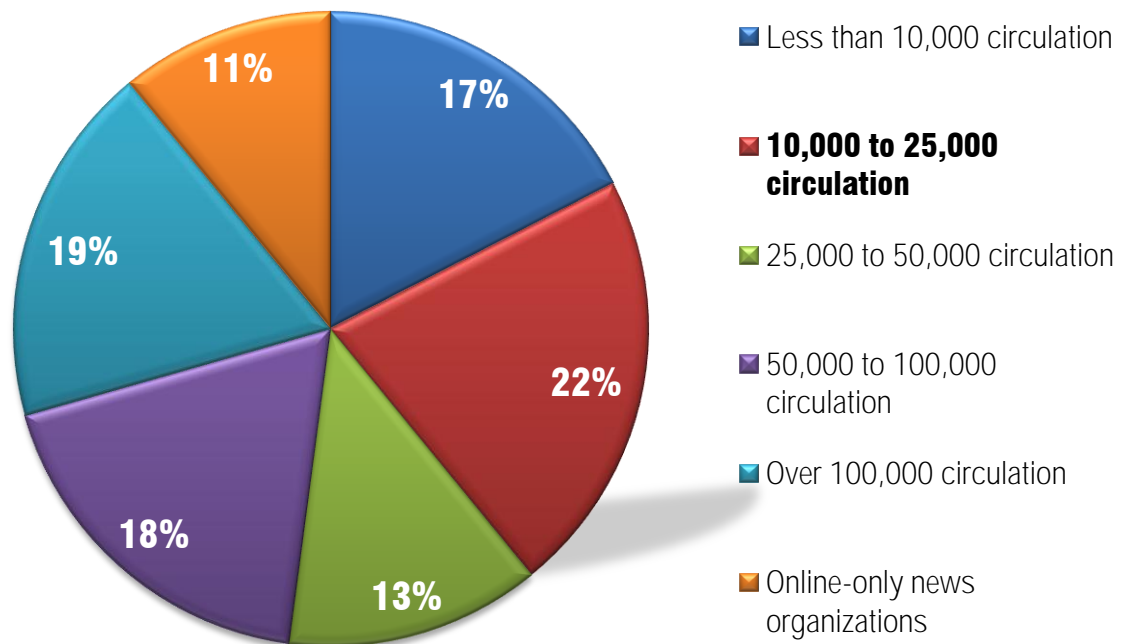
- ▶ It's time to be realistic about staffing levels and to make choices about what to stop doing, and what to prioritize.
- ▶ build innovation labs to stimulate change
- ▶ Move out deadwood and upgrade talent.
- ▶ Set tighter priorities and stop trying to do everything with fewer resources.
- ▶ Stabilizing the news operation, which has been reeling from reductions and consolidations.
- ▶ We just went through a newsroom redesign and integration plan, and have increase our freelance base, CGM and partnerships with nonprofits and other newspapers. While still very important we are down the path quite a ways on those initiatives.
- ▶ How do I do these things myself -- and how do I build a revenue stream.
- ▶ Most newsrooms should be well along in all of these categories rather than just launching them now so these are difficult to access given we already are well along.
- ▶ We need to widen the net for deliberate crowd sourcing to provide more local information to deepen the breadth of coverage and expand the sense of communal ownership. Expand ownership, personalize the products and we will build credibility.

RESPONDENT'S POSITION OR PRIMARY AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY

- Group executive
- Other News Department Manager
- Academic
- Retired
- Publisher, President or General Manager
- **Editor, Director or Manager**
- Entrepreneur or Consultant
- Other



AVERAGE CIRCULATION SIZE OF RESPONDENT'S NEWS ORGANIZATION



What slows you down or stops you from accomplishing your most important priorities?

- ▶ Working extremely shorthanded and constantly under pressure. Not having funds to staff adequately.
- ▶ Funding
- ▶ Too many competing demands in both print and digital realms. Not enough staffers trained to accomplish all of the tasks required to be successful digitally. Limits on hiring people with the necessary skill set.
- ▶ The sheer number of different challenges each day presents -- from personnel concerns to responding to readers to managing ever-dwindling resources to old-fashioned editing and story development. It's difficult to think differently and develop new ways of producing and presenting news when all that is coming at you every day.
- ▶ There is so much more to grasp and understand than ever before, and so much more information at our fingertips, that it's difficult to sort what is important to know from what is just interesting. I find that I'm spending more time with strategic questions than with journalistic matters, simply because I don't want to be caught flat-footed in an ever-changing environment. How do we know what we really need to know, and cast aside what's just a distraction?
- ▶ 1. The pace, complexity and volume of change. 2. The reduction of newsroom autonomy in setting the content vision.
- ▶ manpower
- ▶ Demands of daily journalism, the products and the business. Little time for strategic thinking and execution.
- ▶ Corporate penury. Corporate control that limit entrepreneurship.
- ▶ Having to assume more and more of the daily newsroom operations, such as pagination, as staff dwindles.
- ▶ Small staff, too many tasks going at same time with small staff, special sections and other projects which are not the daily newspaper
- ▶ A traditional approach to covering news - reporting, writing, shooting photos and editing a newspaper published every 24 hours - impairs innovation. Print-centric thinking served us well for generations. But now it stymies us - especially when it's time to plan, create and market products for digital platforms. This slows us in most aspects of the operation, from the newsroom to production to advertising to marketing to circulation.
- ▶ keeping up with the deluge of things like email and day-to-day flash fires that must be addressed. far fewer hands to help with things like staff development, long term planning -- even newspaper contests. they were a source of pride for the staff, but have become just one more obligation nobody has time to deal with.
- ▶ daily grind with less resources/staff
- ▶ Limited pool of strong candidates to fill available positions in the office.

What slows you down or stops you from accomplishing your most important priorities? ... continued

- ▶ Scheduled and unscheduled meetings/conversations, questions from members of the public and "busy work" that is necessary, but could be done by editorial assistant if properly trained
- ▶ Technology and corporate paperwork. We need more money and personnel to become the digital news organization we profess to be, and not just cribbing from our print budget.
- ▶ Lack of time and early deadlines.
- ▶ time, manpower and constant barrage of "new" initiatives
- ▶ So many changes, hard to stay focused
- ▶ The biggest impediment has been having to continuously react to wave after wave of staff cuts by realigning coverage with existing resources. There also appears to be no way to financially back new innovations or strategies as a result.
- ▶ I think many news agencies are living hand to mouth, literally trying to meet cost-cutting goals from one quarter to the next. A plan, any plan, give the employees and the public something to rally around. More of the same is killing us.

And managers really need to open themselves to employee-led initiatives. As a whole, their workers spend much more time as ordinary participants in the new media environment than they do.

- ▶ The amount of work each day that has to be accomplished at a small daily that prints seven times a week, maintains an active website and has seen a 100 percent growth in the number of people who view us on facebook in the last month. Time to plan and think beyond the next day are rare luxuries at smaller papers.
- ▶ Lack of technical skill sets combined with limitations of current work processes and organizational structure. The old gets in the way of the new.
- ▶ not knowing what is fad and what is real in advancing journalistic service to communities
- ▶ It's not just money - it's the rare ability/opportunity to find qualified, motivated staff members.
- ▶ The massive amount of retraining for older employees while the technology and practices are changing quickly.
- ▶ Repetitive meetings and visits by people in community that end up having little to do with news coverage.
- ▶ Our newsroom has no barrier from the public.
Staff size
- ▶ Lack of resources; juggling many more tasks than in the past; finding the right people to get the job done
- ▶ The daily news.
- ▶ Lack of "thinking" time. As staffing has shrunk our mantra has become "no job too small." Editors don't have time to formulate well-thought-out, well-communicated strategies. It seems we bounce around and tend to the most pressing needs of the day - personnel issues, budget reviews, managing the publisher. Change is happening at such a rapid pace, it is difficult to determine what will work and what won't in the new media environment.
- ▶ Declining revenues and a slow-to-recovery economy; plus human resource rules that could make the elimination of deadwood a difficult venture.
- ▶ Lack of staff

What slows you down or stops you from accomplishing your most important priorities? ... continued

- ▶ Too many interruptions, distractions ... not able to put together a stretch of time that's long enough to focus and complete anything that can't be accomplished in five minutes. Urgent (and critical) items roll in at a constant pace, derailing any opportunity to focus on strategic thinking, development and implementation. I can get a lot of things started, but it's becoming harder and harder to see them through to successful completion.
- ▶ Low revenue to support newsroom budgets
- ▶ Economic expediences, restructuring and inability to stabilize workforce due to advertising/funding problems
- ▶ Ownership focus on current rather than future results
- ▶ Increased responsibilities, lack of resources
- ▶ Staffing, technical issues
- ▶ Lack of equipment to accomplish online initiatives, as well as lack of training.
- ▶ Time management, both on part of reporters and editors/photographers.
- ▶ Lack of time.
- ▶ There are too many uncontrollables that affect us from one day to the next. Solid planning has gone out the window because we are constantly triaging the operation.
- ▶ Things change quickly and priorities are changed. Finding time to think and discuss with all the demands of the day.
- ▶ Resource deprivation - we're past the point of being able to consistently sustain daily journalism with the number of people we have.
- ▶ Not enough people or time
- ▶ Not enough time in a given week for myself and senior managers to tackle and launch with staff. We accomplish our goals but it takes far longer at 96 FTE than it did at 286 FTE. And at times, we lurch as a company from one mission to another -- sometimes abandoning items in mid stream -- without double checking to see if the action item really aligns with our strategic plan.
- ▶ Lack of planning time and resources
- ▶ Staff reductions
- ▶ Understaffed newsroom
- ▶ Too many tasks that detract from the focus.
Too many resource cuts.
Too much corporate interference rather than help.
- ▶ Money and uncertainty of where the industry is headed.
- ▶ The day-to-day grind with a reduced staff (which is quickly becoming the new norm) of making sure we have enough content for the paper creates a pushback on the time we have for long-term goals, plans or projects. It's finding time, even though we are in crisis mode, to look up and forward.
- ▶ News staff that's spread too thin.

What slows you down or stops you from accomplishing your most important priorities? ... continued

- ▶ all of the other important priorities
 - i.e. the need to produce different content for different platforms (mobile, online, social media, print, etc.) and finally acknowledging that this is very different content at times - not just publishing the same content to different platforms - yet, there is the expectation that it all be done with the exact same staff and with the same quality
- ▶ We are overwhelmed with ideas from all directions and there is no clear cut mission on which direction to spend our resources.
- ▶ time and resources. easilt distracted from top priorities of the organization often by putting out daily fires. There does not seem to be enough time to be a visionary and manage the newsroom.
- ▶ Lack of revenue
- ▶ Corporate ownership
- ▶ Having to get off track to cut expenses, over and over and over.
- ▶ Nothing.
- ▶ The crush of details and decisions required to get out the daily paper. It leaves very little time for global solutions and strategizing.
- ▶ Lack of resources. Plus, we're so busy figuring out how to get today's paper out, there's little time or energy for strategizing.
- ▶ Time and money. Everyone is doing the work that 4 people used to do. Difficult to push forward at the pace everyone is running.
- ▶ Quality control issues, personnel matters, general firefighting duties that go with the job.
- ▶ Only 24 hours in the day. Short-staffing amid the "daily grind" hampers even more. And as always in the newsroom, interruptions ranging from breaking news to incoming phone calls and queries that absorb time and toss planning.

I and other editors have only so much gas in the tank.
- ▶ We have a small staff and when one or two people are gone in can cause us to slow down meeting these priorities and prevent some of the "extras" from being attempted.
- ▶ Internal inertia and a staff mourning the loss of the past. Budget cuts don't help either.
- ▶ Lack of buy-in or willingness to address change by ownership
- ▶ Competing tactics that sometimes interrupt strategic plan.
Worse than expected economy.
- ▶ Time, staffing, funding
- ▶ Increasing demands of the print edition with fewer resources in the newsroom. Not enough hours in the day.
- ▶ Institutional inertia
Budget constraints
Balance maintaining traditional revenue streams while building new ones
Developing teams able to manage continuous change effectively

What slows you down or stops you from accomplishing your most important priorities? ... continued

- ▶ Organization issues, being pulled in too many directions, not enough time to think and plan.
- ▶ Time and money
- ▶ Day to day fires, huge, albeit self imposed, expectations to multi-task with shrinking newsroom resources
- ▶ Layoffs and buyouts. We've been doing them two-three times per year and each job action eats up planning time at the front end and requires time on the back end to manage impact, a two-month minimum impact. Plus it distracts the newsroom and forces us to strip work down to the basics rather than juggle longer term or growth opportunities.
- ▶ Indecision and micro-management from the top.
- ▶ In the past four years the newsroom has gone from resisting change, to leading the charge to change. We did that by reorganizing the newsroom structure to support our local news gathering core mission and by fully integrating digital news team into the newsroom. What slows us down is waiting for the culture in the rest of the company to change. What also slows us down is constant downsizing. It steals momentum, but gives us an opportunity to evaluate every opening we have. So if someone leaves, we don't automatically hire someone to do that same job; we look to see if that opening needs to be converted to a position that helps our transition to a news/information company with multiple delivery platforms.
- ▶ What the hell else: Money, revenue, budget, resources--whatever you want to call it.

And the talent available to newspapers is dropping in number, not necessarily in level of talent.

- ▶ The increase in daily tasks added to my plate by downsizing
- ▶ Bureacracy...Dealing with a variety of divisions, then with Corporate parent as well.
- ▶ Not enough staff. Cuts have been too deep.
- ▶ This is a perplexing time. I am not a believer that print will endure in the near term, as in five years. This is moving very rapidly. Tablet ownership is growing tremendously. This is our future. So we tread two worlds. We will soon say goodbye to one world and hello to a totally different world. This is the generation of transition. The challenge is to keep your eyes on the end game. It's here.
- ▶ Lack of strategic vision at the top.
- ▶ Inertia, fear and lack of resources
- ▶ Resources...lack of
- ▶ The largest challenge for us as a newspaper is that we are not all playing together -- not in the newsroom, where some people are doing great work both online and preserving print readership but too many others are hiding in old habits -- and not between the newsroom and advertising or circulation. The disparity in our readiness to change diminishes the work of our best people.
- ▶ Speed of change, overlapping job eliminations and other budget cuts, everything is urgent.
- ▶ Diminished staffing in the news department
- ▶ Changing corporate priorities and constantly revised budgets.