

WPA President's Letter

October 2015

THE STEADY STATE OF CHANGE

In the world of media we've all had to become increasingly nimble. Long gone are the days where an editorial staff of a monthly magazine could focus just on making a great magazine, and notoriously complain about the deadline pressures and long hours associated with getting a magazine done. Today, those same staffs are not only producing the magazine (albeit smaller than it once was) but also managing the daily postings on its website, social media channels and directing video creation. The complaining continues, but now it's actually justified.

At my company, we're trying hard to find that proper work balance given all of the modes of communication and content distribution. We've replaced legacy editorial positions such as assistant art directors and associate editors with modern day positions such as social media editors and video content managers. Everyone on the editorial team is tasked with multi-media responsibilities. A photo editor now is expected to post daily images into our Instagram accounts, for instance, instead of just gathering and editing amazing images for the magazine or Web site. Instead of the Web editor being hired to work on the website alone, that position is now working more like an air traffic controller with the entire staff and freelance network, ensuring that all facets of digital media are aligned and hitting targets.

Editorial meetings are no longer about editorial calendars, quality of content and budget management, but now begin with dashboard reports of analytics that reveal if the team is hitting expected metrics in online page views, Facebook posts, video posts, time on site goals and, oh yeah, newsstand sell-throughs (print and digital) and subscription renewal rates. Sales teams discuss multi-media packaging, social media metrics and referrals for their clients, and interfacing with editorial on custom, native projects.

Personally, I find the constant change invigorating. Most certainly it's more stressful than ever before, but being able to grow our audiences while satiating our consumer base through rich content platforms is exciting, as is being able to create meaningful marketing packages for clients. But it's not easy work, and the pressures on today's workforces are greater than ever.

We'd love to hear your thoughts on how you're managing the new demands placed on media creators these days. Share your impressions and/or stories on how you and your company are dealing with the constant pace of change by emailing us at wpa@wpa-online.org. We'll post some of your comments in our next newsletter.

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