

Survive and Thrive

Developing new strategies for challenging times

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Looking to chart a new direction?

- The news industry is caught in a perfect storm:
 - A recession rooted in a housing downturn.
 - Underlying changes in consumer habits affecting major retail and classified advertisers.
 - Fragmentation of the audience due to increasing media choices, new competitors and changing demographics.
 - New technology, including internet broadband and mobile devices, make us increasingly connected and provide a wealth of choices for getting information -- and delivering advertising.



Point of No Return?

- Many days, it feels like we have gone over the edge, leaving the world as we have known it.
- But where are we going?



Introducing Survive and Thrive

- The Touchstone News Survive and Thrive program helps companies develop new strategies for challenging times.
 - Survive through short-term tactics consistent with the core mission and vision for the business.
 - Adapt and mobilize your workforce by focusing on maintaining what's truly essential.
 - Thrive by developing new strategies and businesses.

About David Stoeffler

- 30-plus years of news industry experience. Led or participated in numerous strategic planning exercises.
- As a consultant, conducted training or operational reviews for companies such as: Schurz, GateHouse, Times-Shamrock, Stephens Media, Glacier Media.
- Led print and online news strategy as vice president for news of Lee Enterprises.
- Served as top editor of papers in La Crosse, Wis., and Lincoln, Neb., and publisher/editor of Arizona Daily Star in Tucson.
- Prior to forming consultancy, was general manager of Suburban Journals of Greater St. Louis.

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Worth at least what you pay for it

5 steps to ensure success

Q. I am relocating and starting a new management job with my current company. I am very excited about the opportunity and want to start things off on a positive note. What are the top five most important things to do when starting a new management position to ensure success?

A. I'll give you five, plus a bonus tip that applies to anyone moving to a new job.

(read more)

The Touchstone for Innovation
Testing ideas for better newspapers and web sites

Green House (HeraldTimesOnline.com, Bloomington, Ind.)

If you're looking for examples of community newspapers doing innovative things, you'd do well to follow the efforts of the staff at the Bloomington (Ind.) Herald Times.

The **Green House** blog is just one example from the free portion of the web site (most daily news is in the subscription portion of the site).

Leora Baude, a copy editor/reporter at the Herald-Times, started the blog in May 2007 and has provided a steady series of enlightening and entertaining entries on her efforts to be "green" in everyday living.

Here's how she described it in her initial entry: "I'd like to do better — be a less trashy, less gassy, more resourceful, more knowledgeable householder — even if I can't see my way to a really radical project, like giving up toilet paper, or growing a beard and becoming an urban homesteader, or even just wearing the same dress every day for a year. I want to figure out what changes I can make that are really for the better, what changes I will, realistically, live with — and also what changes the other member of my household, who is a lot less excited than I am about this foray into green housekeeping, will put up with."

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Getting started

- Telephone conference to determine scope of work and timeframe.
- Pre-visit data request.
 - Review product samples.
 - Consult with local personnel to develop and share key metrics, benchmarks and market information.
- On-site interviews with key leaders:
 - Understand current strategies.
 - Identify critical issues.

Strategic planning session

- Facilitate 1-2 day planning session involving key management personnel and others as appropriate.
 - Discuss recent events and trends – talk about the implications for the business going forward.
 - Discuss and analyze the business environment:
 - Economic and demographic trends.
 - Technology.
 - Regulatory and government factors.
 - Competitors.

Identifying critical issues

- Determine which trends and environmental factors are critical to survival or critical to success.
 - What makes it a critical issue?
 - What have we tried in the past?
 - What are others in the industry, or our competitors, doing to address the issue?

Short-term vs. long-term

- Given the economic environment, a critical step in any planning process is to identify:
 - Short-term business objectives.
 - What will success look like this year? This quarter?
 - What principles will guide our decisions?
 - Long-term strategies.
 - How can we leap ahead of our current difficulties to build our business for the future?
 - Where can we find resources to support the best opportunities?

Red Ocean vs. Blue Ocean strategies

- Red Oceans are current market spaces:
 - You try to outperform rivals in order to grab greater share of market, turning the water bloody.
 - Prospects for profits and growth are reduced as products turn into commodities.
 - Examples: line extensions or incremental improvements.
- Blue Oceans are new market spaces:
 - Clear water, untainted by competition.
 - Demand is created by understanding consumer needs.
 - Growth is profitable and rapid.

Strategies, tactics and action plans

- Outcomes from strategic planning session:
 - Identify key business objectives and opportunities.
 - Short-term and long-term.
 - Red Ocean and Blue Ocean.
 - Outline strategies and tactics to meet objectives.
 - Designate champions to develop detailed action plans and timelines.

Report and next steps

- Following the strategic planning session, a post-visit report will be produced to:
 - Summarize the situational analysis.
 - Outline critical issues and proposed actions.
 - Identify outstanding issues or concerns not addressed in the plan.
 - Propose follow-up projects to assist with implementation of strategies and tactics.

What others say

- *David's equally comfortable in the newsroom and the boardroom. He's a brilliant editor, an exceptional journalist and a strong communicator, able to draw great ideas from staff, readers, demographic and readership data and his own broad range of experiences. He's equally skilled in strategic development and the nuts and bolts of turning good ideas into good content.*
 - Kevin Mowbray, Vice President-Publishing, Lee Enterprises, and Publisher, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*

- *David Stoeffler can help you create a plan for expanding your print and online audiences based on your market's needs and opportunities. He brings a sharp mind, broad experience in the industry and a commitment to vigorous, relevant journalism.*
 - Joyce Dehli, Vice President for News, Lee Enterprises

Thank You! Contact info

- For pricing and more details, contact:

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Other services:

- Operational reviews for product improvements and cost controls.
- Low-cost training and one-on-one coaching programs.
- Targeted new product development.
- Increased management effectiveness.
- Improved recruiting.

