

Touchstone Visiting Editor

David Stoeffler

Touchstone News Consulting

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Training needs vs. the budget

- Training budgets are often the first to go during tough times brought on by economic disruptions and evolving business models.
- Yet the need for training is even more critical during these times as newsrooms try to reinvent themselves with fewer resources.
 - Energize your newsroom -- just when you need them to develop new ideas and continue to grow audiences.
 - Provide staff with new ideas and tools to help grow the business.



Introducing Visiting Editor

- Visiting Editor is a low-cost, high-impact program offering:
 - Daily training seminars directly addressing local issues and needs.
 - One-on-one coaching for top editors and others.
 - Participation and feedback on day-to-day newsroom activities.
 - A post-visit critique identifying opportunities for improving journalism or news operations.

Visiting Editor David Stoeffler

- 30-plus years of news industry experience. Frequent speaker at ASNE, NAA and other conventions.
- 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.

TOUCHSTONE NEWS CONSULTING

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FREE ADVICE
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

- Prior to the visit, clear goals are established and a schedule set based on local needs.
- Typically, key editors meet with David for dinner the night prior to launch.
- A kickoff session is designed to appeal to the entire staff.

Seminar series

- Each day, David presents a 90-minute seminar with attendance determined by the local editors.
 - Seminars may be scheduled at different times of the day or evening to serve targeted groups.
- Seminars are selected from a list of topics.
 - Customized seminars available for added fee.

Digital seminars

- Creating an online strategy
 - **Who:** Top editors, leaders from online and other departments.
 - **Key takeaways:** Learn critical demographic and readership trends and keys to building your own online strategy; learn actionable tactics employed in other markets to grow traffic and improve stickiness.

- Writing and producing for the web
 - **Who:** All newsroom staff.
 - **Key takeaways:** Learn to develop and prepare content for the web in order to maximize readership and improve traffic; see examples from other web sites.

Print/online seminars

- Ideas to build readership in print and online
 - **Who:** All newsroom staff.
 - **Key takeaways:** Learn a framework to think about reader needs and get 50+ specific ideas from other papers and web sites.

- Newsroom structures for changing times
 - **Who:** Editors and key staffers.
 - **Key takeaways:** Ideas for restructuring the newsroom to balance the demands of a digital age, while meeting the needs of the print edition.

Management topics

- Achieving high standards with limited resources
 - **Who:** Editors.
 - **Key takeaways:** Learn to identify key goals and discuss techniques for maintaining high standards during difficult times.

- Effective mid-level management in the newsroom
 - **Who:** Mid-level managers.
 - **Key takeaways:** Day-to-day tips for developing a high-performing team, managing up and maintaining your sanity.

Journalism topics

- Developing a watchdog culture
 - **Who:** All newsroom staff.
 - **Key takeaways:** Tips for creating a watchdog state of mind for daily journalism and details on developing and executing projects. Develop specific ideas for short-term and long-term watchdog reports.

- Maintaining and enriching journalism in a customer-focused, digital world
 - **Who:** Editors and key staffers.
 - **Key takeaways:** Learn to identify core values and explore tactics for tapping customers and using digital tools to enhance journalism.

Business topics

- Improving the news-advertising partnership
 - **Who:** Editors and advertising managers.
 - **Key takeaways:** Break down walls and develop specific plans to use existing print and online space to increase revenues while maintaining journalistic integrity.

- Key trends affecting the news business
 - **Who:** All employees (any department).
 - **Key takeaways:** Understand the fundamental trends affecting the news business and discuss ways to address them.

One-on-one coaching

- Editors select individuals (one each day) for two-hour sessions with David.
 - Individuals submit an advance portfolio of work or answer questions about key issues faced in their jobs.
 - Session is tailored to needs of the individual.
 - Employees may be selected from any discipline within the newsroom, though David's expertise will have highest impact on mid-level managers, editors and reporters.

Day-to-day participation

- Due to his broad experience in running newsrooms and the overall business, David can offer insights and observations on typical daily activities and how to improve:
 - Overall newsroom culture.
 - Management effectiveness.
 - Brainstorming ideas.
 - Organization and productivity.
 - Effectiveness of meetings.

Post-visit critique

- Following the visit, David will deliver a written report, summarizing:
 - Strengths and weaknesses of the news product.
 - Observations about organizational issues.
 - Follow-up suggestions on individuals involved in coaching sessions.
 - Any ideas for improving operations, quality journalism or business success.

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*

- *Thank you again for bringing your talent and expertise to Media Management Center's Beyond Commodity seminar. The worksheets you developed to help people identify and address their reservations about customer focus were a great and very helpful tool! It was fun to watch the discussion as it evolved, as people went from articulating conflicts to articulating solutions. Very effective!*
 - **Vivian Vahlberg**, Managing Director, Northwestern University Media Management Center

Thank You! Contact info

- For pricing and more details, contact:

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Other services:

- Operational reviews for product improvements and cost controls.
- Targeted new product development.
- Increased management effectiveness.
- Customized training.
- Improved recruiting.

