

NOTES ON CHAPTER 8

BEST QUOTE

In today's competitive market, every product must remain as fresh as possible.

BY THE NUMBERS

18

Pages in this chapter

11%

Redesigning

17%

Evaluating

6%

Gathering examples

6%

Compiling a shopping list

11%

Building prototypes

6%

Testing and promotion

6%

Writing a stylebook

6%

Launching

28%

Gallery

Percentages may not total to 100% due to the addition of structural pages and exercises.

REDESIGNING YOUR PAPER

Nobody likes change. But every newspaper needs to reinvent itself regularly.

1 EVALUATING YOUR PAPER

Before tinkering with your format, make sure your staff agrees on what's working, what's broken and where a redesign should take you. Evaluate everything from headlines, to photography, to alternative copy, to use of color, to coverage and the production systems you have in place.

2 GATHERING EXAMPLES

Find out what your colleagues are up to. Study well-designed papers. As you discover new design ideas, explore ways to adapt them to your paper.

3 COMPILING A SHOPPING LIST

Once you've identified your flaws and established goals, pinpoint specific items that need repair or replacement. Decide what's got to stay and what's got to go, what's mandatory and what's optional.

4 BUILDING PROTOTYPES

Some advice.

- Allow enough time.
- Be honest. Stay real.
- Use dull material.
- Don't steal.
- Stay open to opinions.
- Present plenty of options.

5 TESTING AND 6 PROMOTION

You may think you know what your readers want. You probably don't, unless you ask them. Conduct reader surveys and focus groups to see what your loyal readers, occasional readers and non-readers want from the paper.

7 WRITING A STYLEBOOK

A design stylebook is one method of ensuring consistency in a publication. Stylebooks aren't meant to stifle creativity. They're meant to save time. The best stylebooks are detailed and complete.

8 LAUNCHING AND 9 FOLLOWING UP

Consider whether it's best to launch the redesign all at once or in phases. Both options have advantages. In any case, monitor and modify your new formats until they're fully integrated into the newsroom by

- appointing a "style copy" to target all design violations;
- setting up a design bulletin board to display successes and to analyze mistakes;
- sending out memos discussing problems and summarizing solutions; and
- holding regular sessions to assess the redesign.

REDESIGN GALLERY

Before-and-after examples from

- The Bakersfield Californian
- The Kansas City Star
- The Center News