



Trends we saw

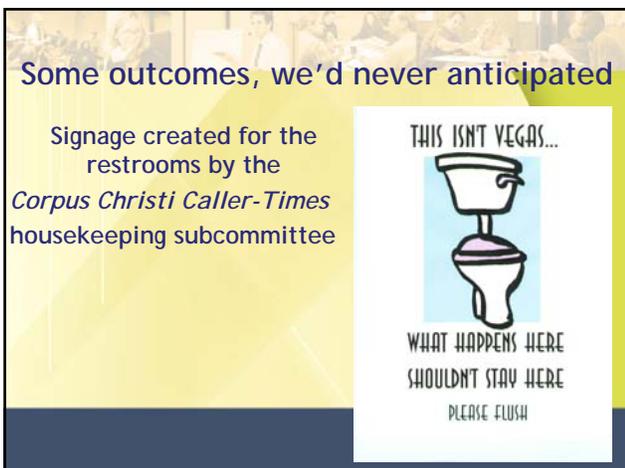
Learning Newsroom Symposium III
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 The Learning Newsroom
 at the American Press Institute 



After ...

- Providing 928 journalists with 18,560 hours of Learning Newsroom classes,
- In 125, 4-hour sessions,
- Bolstered by hundreds of hours of committee conversations,
- Through 126 newsroom visits (vw),
- Supported by dozens of conference calls,
- Facilitated by thousands of emails ...



Some outcomes, we'd never anticipated

Signage created for the restrooms by the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* housekeeping subcommittee




What we know

- Journalists are ready for this.
- Particularly younger staffers.
- In fact, there are many anxious to play a greater role in helping shape their newspaper's responses to industry challenges - but they must see action.
- There will be nay-sayers, even if you're successful.
- This is a process, versus an event. We created a yearlong focus around change. And that was just the start.
- But we are convinced *newsrooms can change*.



Learning Newsroom vs. Traditional newsroom

Info shared widely	Info held by few
Goals well-known	Strategy a secret
Ideas flow bottom-up	Command/control
Takes smart risks	Waits for a rescue
Trains to goals	Training is static
Anticipates change	Clings to old ways



Where it worked best

- There was a single, clear champion for the work versus general support from management team.
- And in year 2 ...
 - Steering committees remained intact. Efforts faltered quickly when committees scaled down their profile. A year isn't long enough to change our "DNA."
 - Editors reiterated their commitment to concepts.
 - Mid-level managers took ownership.
 - New hires were formally introduced to the concepts.
 - Training minimums were set, tied to performance management systems



Pete's observations

- Changing culture is disruptive
- Progress is evolutionary
- People expect, yet reject, magic
- Journalists are convinced they are different
- Discovery learning is hard
- Few like to give up control
- Four hours is not a long time



Needs commonly cited in advance surveys

- Environment that supports risk-taking
- More frequent interaction with senior editors
- Greater transparency around decisions
- Less influence by a few, strong personalities; more collaboration
- No silos (assignments, training across departments)

Common areas for outcomes

- Online improvements - more multimedia, more frequent updates, more experimentation
- Improved operations (restructuring news budget meetings, moves to universal budgets)
- Training plan improvements - More broad-based, targeted, measurable, valuable
- Increased reader interaction, especially with young readers

Needed from top editors

- Patience
- Introspection as to own style
- Help in dispelling the myth that these concepts are a threat to, or unimportant to, "Capital J" journalists
- Help in dispelling the "young vs. old" myth
- Help in dispelling mid-level manager fears
- Clarification of vision of newsroom, organization
- Timely decisions (yes/ no/ need more info)
- Celebration of smart risks

In short, less direction, more leadership

What we'd do differently

- Break out communication training
- Sequence: OCI results, communication, business literacy, innovation, process improvement, work out/time management
- Coach committee even more intensively to help with their effectiveness as change agents. Provide: process improvement tools, role playing exercises on conflict resolution, making the business case for desired changes or new products
- Create a special session for mid-managers

What we wouldn't change

- 4-hour classes
- Provocative stances, pushing comfort zones
- Asking mid-managers to hold back for first 6 months to let committee get on its feet

The Social Contract for journalists *Comparing Old to New*

- Old: Produce and you will be left alone; employees are questioning, skeptical, and independent; leaders decide, tell, and assign; followers look for flaws and errors.
- New: Competition with other media requires collaboration and teamwork; associates must become candid, transparent, and interdependent; leaders coach, advise, and approve; 'partners' seek change and innovation.

Our question for you:

Yes, we believe newsrooms can change.
Will it stick?

