

Design is not an 'extra'



Think of design as an 'extra' and interest in your newspaper begins to fade.

I've had it.

I just received an e-mail from an editor who was excited about a new look for her paper.

We had reviewed an issue of her newspaper together and the paper very much needs design work. On top of that, she's struggling just to put the paper together every week—her company switched her to InDesign a few months ago. Oh, yeah...they gave her some training to handle the new software. Four hours. With someone who knew nothing about how newspapers are put together, much less how newsrooms function.

Her e-mail read, in part: "...the company won't fork out any money for any 'extras' at this time."

I am so sick and tired of design being written off as an "extra." And—honestly—it's not because it means less business. It's because thinking of design as an "extra" is so short-sighted, especially nowadays when publishers are jumping through hoops trying to gain and retain print readers.

What is the v-e-r-y first thing a person sees when he looks at your newspaper? The design. The way your paper looks speaks volumes about the product as a whole.

It says yours is a newspaper that's credible. Or not.

It says yours is a newspaper that's careful. Or not.

It says yours is a newspaper that's planned. Or not.

It says yours is a newspaper that's professional. Or not.

It tells readers yours is a newspaper that's polished. Or not.

It tells readers yours is a newspaper that's organized. Or not.

It tells readers yours is a newspaper that's consistent. Or not.

For far too many publishers, however, design is an "extra."

Yeah...

Like accurate reporting is an "extra."

Like good writing is an "extra."

Like making deadline is an "extra."

Like selling ads is an "extra."

Like good sales training is an "extra."

Like hiring the right people is an "extra."

Like checking your P&L regularly is an "extra."

Design is not an "extra." It's one of the key ingredients you need to create a newspaper that's worth reading—and worth advertising in.

But it's your choice. You can continue to discount the value of design...you can keep thinking of design as an "extra."

And eventually, even that P&L won't matter.



'101 HENNINGER HELPFUL HINTS'

is filled with so many good ideas. You'll find yourself asking: "Why didn't I think of that?"

Kevin Slimp

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FREE DESIGN EVALUATION:

Ed Henninger offers design evaluations—at no charge and with no obligation—to readers of this column.

ED HENNINGER is an independent newspaper consultant and Director of Henninger Consulting.

Offering comprehensive newspaper design services including redesigns, workshops, design training and design evaluations.

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