

Handling design change

There is one immutable law in nature: change. Like it or not, things change. And like it or not, the design of your newspaper is going to change.

Despite that 50-plus page Design Style Guide, despite all those InDesign style sheets, despite those carefully constructed templates...your design is going to change.

And it should!

You really don't want the same design today that you had a dozen years ago. That doesn't mean you have to make wholesale design changes every few months but as situations change for your newspaper, well, your design needs to respond those changes.

Change just doesn't happen at your place? No? How long has it been since your paper's width was reduced? Didn't you consider some design changes then? How about the teaser rail? How about the top-of-page-one teasers?

So, change is going to happen. The question is: How do you make sure it works for your readers? My answer: Work to control change.

Here are your weapons:

DESIGN STYLE GUIDE: Your best tool against

**This headline is set in 36 point
in Garamond Bold Condensed**

**This head 36 point
Garamond Bold Condensed**

Taking headlines from flush left to centered is a change you want to control.

capricious change. It's the document that spells out your design details. If you're going to make changes, those changes need to be balanced against the dictates in the style guide.

THE GROUP: If you've established a design group (just three or four people will do), a majority of its members would have to agree to a major design change. And, yes, even the smallest paper can have a design group. There's no law that says your group

can't include someone from the advertising and circulation departments.

THE EDITOR: Well, someone at your newspaper is in charge of the design...right? Count on this person to be the first to notice any change that's out of the norm.

Change is good...if it's change we want to make happen, and not just change that we let happen.



'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

Director
Institute of Newspaper
Technology

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.

www.henningerconsulting.com
edh@henningerconsulting.com
803-327-3322