Editorial-Business Collaboration

Tom Huang, The Dallas Morning News
Zella Bracy, The McClatchy Company
Introduction

• Newsrooms must move beyond the traditional firewall between the business side and editorial to generate revenue while maintaining ethical boundaries and building credibility.
Guiding Principles

• Foster an ongoing dialogue between editorial and business side like neighbors across a fence, not a wall.

• Brainstorm revenue opportunities as a team while maintaining journalistic independence — be clear about where you draw the line.
Guiding Principles

• Collaborate on community events that build your brand and reader/customer loyalty.

• Brainstorm ways to reach new audiences.

• Be transparent about what is editorial content and what is advertising content.
Case Study: JFK50 Project

• In January 2013, The Dallas Morning News launched a yearlong project examining the impact of the JFK assassination on the city of Dallas 50 years later.

• We wanted to produce excellent public service journalism, engage with the community and explore revenue opportunities.
JFK50.com

- We produced a robust website with more than 50 stories, historic images, videos and graphics, with an opportunity for e-commerce.
Historic Reprint

• We reprinted the complete edition of the Nov. 23, 1963, Dallas Morning News with full coverage of the assassination.

• It was sold in local grocery and convenience stores, and then nationally, through a partnership with USA Today.

• We sold 214,190; earning $406,892 in revenue.
E-book and Hardcover

- We published “JFK Assassination: The Reporters’ Notes,” based on an archive of notes from reporters and editors who covered the assassination.
- 300 e-books and 1,300 hardcovers sold, for $40,000 in revenue.
Documentary

• A video was produced by The News, based on interviews of 28 key JFK figures who witnessed or covered the tragedy.

• Interviews were conducted by Hugh Aynesworth, a former News reporter who covered the assassination.

• We were unable to get a distribution deal, but sold overseas as a DVD.
Community Event

• We worked with several community partners and organized a symposium with speakers and panels, drawing 500 attendees on Nov. 2, 2013.

• Ticket sales and sponsorships allowed Dallas Institute of Humanities to break even.
Commemorative Section

• We produced a special section on Nov. 22, 2013. It featured the best stories, graphics and photos from our yearlong project.

• Sold $25K sponsorship to City of Dallas, which was organizing a ceremony marking the 50th anniversary of JFK killing.

• We inserted the section in that day’s newspaper and also distributed it to 5,000 attendees of JFK ceremony in Dallas.
Lessons Learned

• Collaboration across departments (news, advertising, marketing, circulation, events) was positive and is being replicated on other projects — we now have a weekly strategy meeting.

• Dallas Morning News is now seen as a community leader, rather than just a newspaper.
Lessons Learned

• To be more effective, we needed a product manager — someone to oversee and market all the products we created.

• We needed a business owner — someone to set business goals and priorities and keep business side accountable.

• Communication was not always consistent, as key departments missed some project meetings.
A Partnership between the Star Tribune and Children’s Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota
Kids’ Health: Section Front

A: Star Tribune and wire generated content with children’s health related themes.

B: Kids’ Health information center. This resource box features links to content from the education section of Children’s Hospital’s website.

C: This seasonal toolbox is evergreen content that refreshes seasonally. It includes Star Tribune and wire content.

*The section marked with dashed lines is content written by Children’s Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota that is curated/selected/edited by the Star Tribune content team.
Children’s Hospital-Authored Story

Content written by Children’s Hospital is curated/selected by the Star Tribune content team and treated like any other niche content source.

A new template is applied to the Children’s Hospital-generated content. This template renders a blue border, a “Presented by” header and a different typeface.

The Star Tribune content team applies journalism standards to what is selected based on how they would evaluate any freelance source of content. No commitment is made to Children’s Hospital regarding inclusion of this content or any other special consideration.
Content Samples

From Star Tribune and wire coverage (all current examples):

• How to tell a cold from the flu: Fever, chills and aches are more likely with the flu (AP)
• Health beat: 'Heads Up' video tries to cut risks of hockey (ST)
• Nap Nanny baby recliners recalled (LA Times)
• Baby bedding linked to toxins (Chicago Tribune)
Content Scope

• Monthly: Related news stories from Star Tribune staff and wires (10-12 month).

• Quarterly: Seasonal health and wellness package of 5-10 stories, staff and freelance.

• Library / database / blogs of content from Children’s Hospital that can be utilized in the monthly and quarterly efforts.

• Links to Children’s Hospital Resource center.
Sponsor Package

• Sponsor owns all of the ad positions on the section front.
• Sponsor has 100 percent SOV of ad positions in story pages targeted to Kids’ Health.
• Sponsor’s resource center features on the section front.
• Sponsor gets no commitments for content inclusion.
Stumbling Blocks

• Negative news coverage affects your business relationship.
• A business client tries to influence your coverage.
• An advertising rep uses detailed editorial information about a business to try to sell advertising.
• You’re not clear about what is editorial and what is advertising.
• You’re not clear about whether a section is sponsored by an underwriter.
In Summary

• Foster an ongoing dialogue between editorial and business side.

• Brainstorm revenue opportunities as a team while maintaining journalistic independence.

• Collaborate on community events that build your brand.

• Brainstorm ways to reach new audiences.

• Be transparent about what is editorial content and what is advertising content.
Thank You

• Are there any questions?