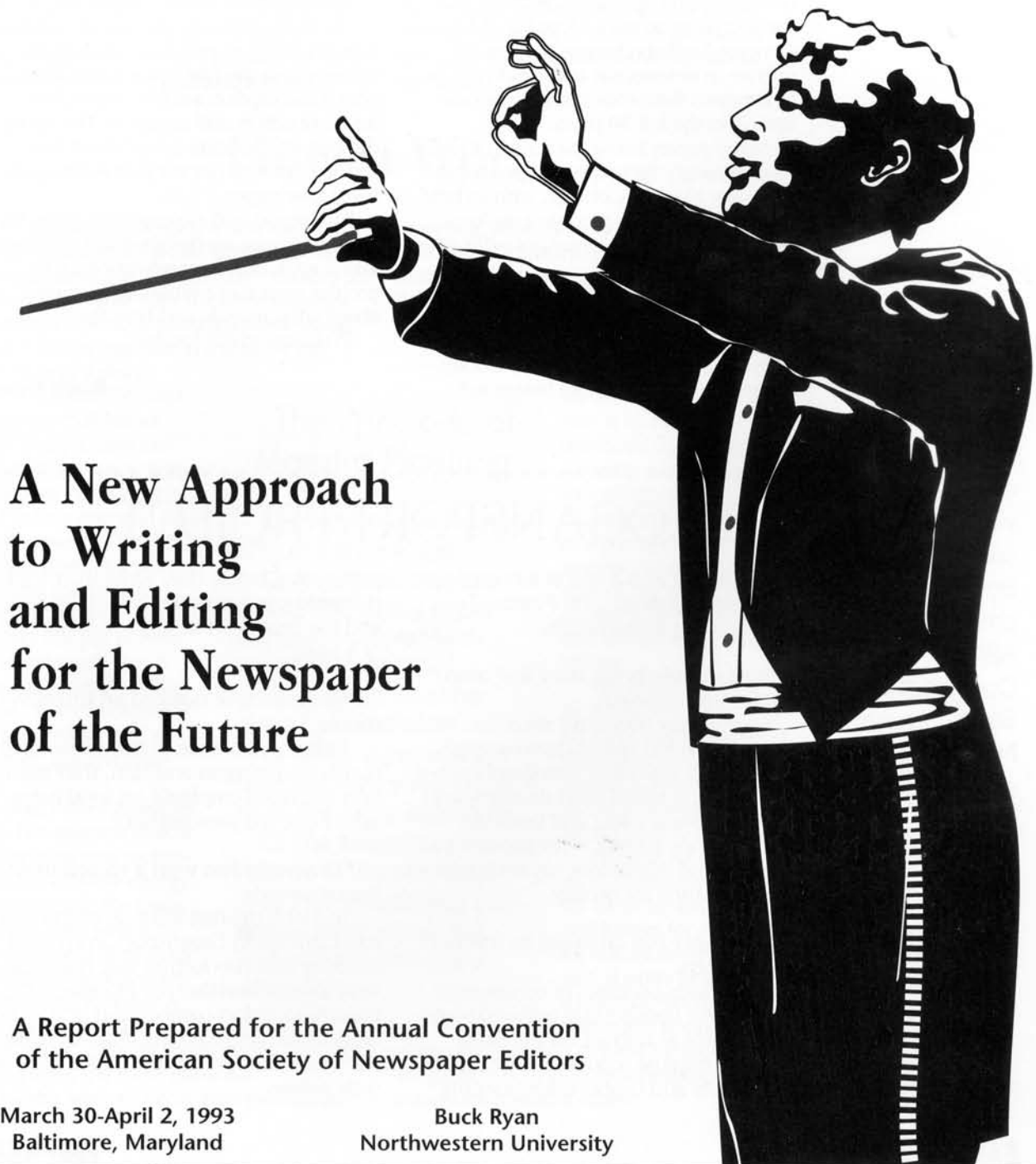


The MAESTRO CONCEPT



**A New Approach
to Writing
and Editing
for the Newspaper
of the Future**

**A Report Prepared for the Annual Convention
of the American Society of Newspaper Editors**

**March 30-April 2, 1993
Baltimore, Maryland**

**Buck Ryan
Northwestern University**

*Leland
"Buck" Ryan,
an assistant pro-
fessor at North-
western Uni-
versity and a
newspaper con-
sultant, created
the Maestro
Concept.*

The Maestro Concept

A look into the future for newspapers

This report focuses on a small newspaper that has fired the first shot in a newsroom management revolution. The *Pharos-Tribune*, a 15,000 circulation afternoon daily in Logansport, Indiana, was the first paper to fully adopt the "Maestro Concept," which changes the way we operate in newsrooms as dramatically as newspapers have changed their appearance over the last 30 years.

Many papers know the power of teamwork through the success of special projects. The Maestro Concept, with its brief but structured story planning sessions, brings that success to the day-to-day paper with routine stories.

The Logansport Project represents an important first step toward understanding what newspapering would be like if we blew up traditional roles in newsrooms—the relationships between bosses and

workers as well as the relationships between reporters, assignment editors, photographers, copy editors, designers and artists.

Traditional newsrooms operate in a Henry Ford, assembly line way in which a reporter builds the chassis, which then moves down the line where a headline, photo and caption are attached before final inspection and assembly. This is not the best way to make cars, Detroit has learned. And it's not the best way to publish a newspaper.

This report and a companion video by the same name are designed to be conversation starters in your newsrooms to prompt your staff to think differently about what they do and how they do it.

Welcome to the future!

Buck Ryan

This report complements a video by the same name.

Both are projects of the ASNE's Committee on Small Newspapers, chaired by Jim Herman.

To order the video, send \$10 to ASNE Foundation, P.O. Box 4090, Reston, Va. 22090, or call (703) 648-1144.

THE LOGANSPORT PROJECT

After a year and a half of working with the Maestro Concept, the *Pharos-Tribune* registers these results:

***Staff members say they feel more creative and efficient.**

Reporters say they have more fun with leads, make fewer call-backs to sources and do fewer rewrites. Photographers feel more like storytellers than shooters, and they travel fewer miles and burn less gasoline. Copy editors, who also work as designers and paginators, say they now have more time for quality.

***The paper has changed its level of expectations.**

Centerpiece packages of community interest have consistently replaced stand-alone photos as lead art on the front page, and because reporters write drafts of headlines and captions and identify

pull-quotes before they write their leads, there are fewer mistakes in display type and less repetition in high-visibility parts of a page.

***Readers have noticed an improvement.**

Either in letters or in unsolicited comments to managers and staff, they mention increased emphasis on local news and improved presentation.

***The paper has won a record number of awards.**

In 1992, the first full year of the Maestro Concept in Logansport, every staff member and two former staff members won awards in either the Hoosier State Press Association competition or the state Associated Press contests. That's double the number of awards the paper had ever won before.

In The Beginning

The Maestro Concept was developed to respond to these problems facing newspapers:

*The **mismanagement of new technology**, particularly pagination and the electronic darkroom. Problems associated with the new technology are commonly called "copy desk problems." They're really newsroom organization and process problems.

*The **frustration and burnout** of quality people being stretched to mediocrity as newspapers try to do more with less. The Maestro Concept saves time and frustration by eliminating inefficiencies and redundancies inherent in the traditional newsroom.

*The **lack of training**. The concept turns the newsroom into a graduate school by

creating an environment in which staff members can learn from each other.

***Source-driven stories** rather than reader-focused ones. Reporters tend to size up stories based on what sources they can reach. The Maestro Concept forces everyone involved in a story—reporters, photographers, designers and editors—to start by brainstorming as a team on readers' questions.

*The **inability of newsrooms** to translate the enthusiasm of reporters and editors onto pages for the readers' benefit. Interesting ideas get dulled down as they move through the maze of desks, departments and shifts that constitute the traditional newsroom.

How It Works

The Maestro Concept is a new approach to writing and editing that flattens the management hierarchy, puts decision making in the hands of those with the most expertise, and brings reporters, photographers, designers and editors together as a team at the beginning of a story.

The Maestro Concept recognizes that before words and pictures can work together on a page, verbal and visual people need to be integrated in the newsroom. This is accomplished in a story planning meeting, or "maestro session," that involves the key players in a story: a reporter; a photographer; a "display editor," the combination of a copy editor and a designer; and the maestro.

Using a story planning form, the maestro directs this meeting and orchestrates the creative energy. In Logansport, the main maestro, who would be the equivalent of managing editor, handles news, business and features. A second maestro, the sports editor, handles sports pages. The larger the paper, the more maestros.

Maestro sessions occur after preliminary

reporting, enough reporting to make sure that we have a story. The session is designed to ensure that the story is fully reported and that it will be presented in the most compelling way for readers.

As a team, those involved in the maestro

session try to identify readers' questions. The goal is to answer those questions in the highest visibility parts of a page: in a photo or artwork, in a headline, in a caption, in a pull-quote, in a graphic or in a box. The start of the text should answer a new question and continue the storytelling.

The entire package is sketched out, including ideas for possible layouts, headlines, photos and graphics. This draft helps to focus the team on what needs to be done.

The process usually takes 15 minutes, shorter for breaking hard news and longer for complicated feature stories. In the end, it saves time and frustration because it eliminates the need for

photo and graphics request forms and keeps assignment editors from repeating the same information several times.

The Principles of Maestro Planning

- Everyone has ownership in the package
- Everyone must be willing and ready to participate; multiple viewpoints are essential
- All ideas must be given consideration
- When agreement is reached, everyone signs on to the story approach
- The Maestro is the referee in the sessions
- The Idea Group generates story ideas; the Maestro session plans execution

Story Planning Form

The latest version of the form — the fifth since the project began — has been reduced to fit in the appendix of this report. The actual form is on legal size paper.

LOGANSPORT'S LESSONS

What have we learned after more than 18 months of experience in a working newsroom?

1. Ego.

This often manifests itself in the expression, "It's not my job." The Maestro Concept redefines job descriptions. Reporters, for example, can no longer say it's not their job to write headlines because we made it their jobs in the reorganization.

Ego also comes into play with ownership of stories. Tradition makes it the reporter's story. The Maestro Concept makes it everyone's story—a team effort.

2. Inertia.

I used to think that inertia had to do with human nature. Now I believe it has mostly to do with lack of training.

Just because you give reporters a new job such as writing headlines before they write their leads, it doesn't mean they can do it—or will do it. People don't like to look bad to themselves or to their boss. Rather than risk looking bad, they don't try. It is important to drive out fear.

The answer lies in individual coaching and positive reinforcement.

3. Time.

Figure out how long it will take to work everyone in your newsroom through a maestro session at least once. Sweat the estimate—go on a retreat if necessary—and come up with a target date. Then double the time frame and you'll be closer to reality.

What you think will take a lot of time will go quickly. Then you'll get hung up on something you didn't expect. Such is the timetable for managing change.

4. Expertise.

Small newspapers suffer from the expertise trap-door effect. A talented staff member leaves and quality falls through the floor.

The Maestro Concept spreads expertise by allowing reporters, photographers, copy editors and designers to learn from each other as they solve problems in teams. Raising the overall level of expertise in the newsroom cuts down on the trap-door effect.

When the Pharos-Tribune's page one designer left the paper, Editor Dan Blom says, the jolt was greatly reduced.

Five factors in managing change emerged during the Logansport Project

5. Delusion.

Delusion in editors and publishers tends to manifest itself in such statements as, "All I have to do is buy Macintosh computers and my paper will look better." The reality is that Macs should come with huge labels on their boxes that say, "Knowledge not included."

Beyond the technology and the training is the question of newsroom organization. When managers try to solve persistent problems with pep talks, they may be suffering delusion. They should look to structural barriers in the traditional newsroom that keep people from doing their best work.

Newspapers need to change their newsrooms as radically as pagination has changed the composing room. The Maestro Concept offers a way to do that.

"Some editors may be reluctant to adopt the Maestro Concept because they fear a disruption at their papers. I see a newsroom in Logansport that has excellent scores on job satisfaction."

—**Michael O'Donnell**

assistant professor at Northwestern University, who surveyed the Pharos-Tribune staff with the help of graduate student Katherine Anderson.

Parting Advice

The best advice for anyone trying to implement the Maestro Concept is not to waste time trying to predict who will click and who will resist. In Logansport, young reporters were just as likely to balk at first as veterans.

First make sure that everyone understands his or her new role and responsibilities and inquire individually about what training is necessary before starting. Then begin with one team and one story and see what happens.

DAN BLOM Editor

Q: The idea of people sketching out layouts in a maestro session makes me nervous. Aren't you forcing the story?



A: No, we're not forcing a story. We're focusing on readers' questions; we are not trying to provide the answers during the planning session. That's the job of reporting. Some reporting is done before the maestro session to make sure that we have a solid story idea. But the real reporting comes after the session, trying to find the answers to those questions we believe will be most important to the reader.

There has to be enough preliminary reporting to ensure that the story exists and that we can summarize the point of the story for those at the planning session. We need everyone to do hard thinking about the story: writers, photographers, designers. We want to be sure everyone understands what story we are telling and what their roles are. It's the only way to get it done effectively. But there still must be flexibility in execution. If reporting uncovers a completely different thread to the story, then it must be followed and we must adjust.

Q: Are maestro sessions the same as brainstorming sessions for story ideas?

A: No, we have a separate meeting to brainstorm story ideas. Maestro sessions aren't brainstorming meetings—they're work sessions.

To ensure the success of maestro sessions over time, you need to have a reservoir of quality story ideas. That's why we set up the Idea Group, which is responsible for generating story ideas that keep the paper on track with its readers.

The Idea Group usually meets once a week to brainstorm on story ideas that can cover whole range of topics and beats, ideas that we might not have ever gotten in the paper otherwise.

The Idea Group has standing members (like the U.N. Security Council), which include the maestro, the lead designer, a photographer and me. But the meetings are open to anyone and we encourage every staff member to attend.

THE EDITOR

Q: Several papers are interested in Total Quality Management or the principles of management guru W. Edwards Deming. How does the Maestro Concept fit in with those ideas?

A: The Deming management principles, in my view, are completely compatible with the Maestro Concept.

We are giving more staff members more opportunity to get their ideas into the process. We are continually improving the process to remove barriers that prevent people from doing their best work.

We have created a common purpose and flattened the hierarchy of newsroom decision-making. Whenever possible, we look for team solutions and decisions, rather than individual decisions.

We have built quality in at the beginning of the process, instead of trying to inspect or edit it in at the end of the process.

Input in the planning session is seen as positive and constructive. The same comments offered in editing a completed story or photo can be seen as negative or critical. We are trying to remove negatives and increase pride in workmanship.

Q: Many newspapers are trying to shift their reporting away from institutional coverage to a reader-focused approach without abandoning their role as government watchdog. How can the Maestro Concept help?

A: The Maestro Concept works as well, or better, on hard news planning. It is easier to identify the effects on readers and reader-action elements in those kinds of stories. The basic functions and responsibilities of the newspaper do not change because of the maestro process, they are just better planned.

The process will push out institutional reporting because the time vacuum is filled with work that has been run through the reality check of reader orientation.

Stories that fulfill the watchdog role are valuable and will survive and flourish in the process.

The Pharos-Tribune, owned by Howard Publications, is an afternoon paper Monday through Friday with a Sunday morning edition. Newspaper sales and coverage extend over six counties. The paper's circulation of 14,800 compares with a city population of 16,800 and a home county population of 42,000. The paper competes with five dailies and five weeklies



DIANE ROBINSON Maestro

Q: Do people really call you maestro?



A: At first, when people would ask my job title, I would say, "assistant editor," because no one knew what a maestro was. But now, word seems to be spreading, and I use the title more and more. For the most part, the staff refers to me by that name — someone will call and they'll say, "You need to talk with Diane; she's our maestro." Usually, I'd say a title really isn't important; it's the responsibilities behind the title that matter. But it's a little different in this case. I think that when a paper is willing to change titles, to use the term 'maestro,' instead of a more traditional word, that shows people the paper is serious about changing. They're making a statement that they're willing to do things differently.

Q: What is a maestro?

A: A maestro is a coach, a mediator, and a planner. The maestro orchestrates the creative energy at the paper — keeping the staff in tune with newsroom reorganization and development, giving story ideas, suggestions, and coordinating planning sessions. The maestro maintains a middle ground, keeping creativity afloat, deflecting negativity, and sifting through ideas to keep meetings succinct and on track.

Q: Compare the paper now to when you worked there as a reporter:

A: I started at the Pharos-Tribune in 1988, in my first newspaper position. I worked on what was then known as the area/state desk. I found that as far as story ideas, I was on my own. I had little input into photo, none in design. There was no front-page packaging, and I suffered bouts of frustration and rage when my stories would be buried, cut or lost. When I became regional editor a year later, I tried to give some guidance to the reporters on my desk, but still, photo and design were totally foreign concepts to me. Headlines

THE MAESTRO

were sometimes inaccurate; cutlines misspelled. After I edited a story, that's the last I saw of it until it appeared in the paper.

I left the paper in 1990, and enjoyed brief stints at papers in Valparaiso and Lafayette. When I was contacted for the maestro position in 1991, I was hesitant about leaving a bigger paper for a smaller one, but the uniqueness of the position piqued my curiosity.

Now I see a staff that has confidence in the final product. Reporters know when and where their stories will run; photographers have input and understanding into stories, and designers have the freedom to flaunt their creativity. There are no more walls between the newsroom factions — they're able to work as a team. It's ironic, but sometimes, in the communications industry, communication itself is sorely lacking. The maestro concept ends that historic problem.

Q: Do you maestro every story?

A: Right now we're at the point where we maestro about 8 out of 10 stories. We have been concentrating on front-page packaging, and now we're moving toward maestroing inside features as well. It would be difficult, even silly, to maestro every school board meeting that has provided only a vague agenda, or a press briefing where little is known about the topic being discussed. You have to have a solid idea before holding a planning session; otherwise, you're wasting time.

Q: When do you hold maestro sessions and how many do you do a day?

A: The number of maestro sessions varies with the week, just like news. I might have four on Monday, two on Tuesday, none on Wednesday, and five on Thursday. One session might be breaking news for that day, another might be for a lifestyle feature for next week, another for the Sunday paper or for two weeks from now. Reporters will usually give me

■ See Maestro, Page 7

*What's a
'Pharos'?*
*The Pharos
was a lighthouse
in ancient Egypt
that was one of
the Seven Wonders
of the
World.*

Timetable for Change

■ **May 3, 1991:** Buck Ryan addresses Howard Publications editors meeting in Chicago on how the Maestro Concept meshes with pagination.

■ **Aug. 1, 1991:** Ryan addresses Pharos-Tribune's staff.

■ **Aug. 18, 1991:** Editor Dan Blom and Buck Ryan interview Diane Robinson for job as maestro.

■ **Sept. 16, 1991:** Maestro Robinson begins training at paper, filling a position that was left frozen when she left the paper the previous year.

■ **Sept. 23-Oct. 7, 1991:** In the first two weeks of maestro sessions, all except one of the front pages featured centerpiece packages—an unprecedented accomplishment for a paper that had relied heavily on stand-alone photos as lead art.

BILL BLAKE Publisher

Q: What's the effect on circulation?

A: It is difficult to see immediate gains in circulation with all the other variables in the system. The economy as well as our 75-cent per week price increase in September 1992 has kept our circulation from growing. It will take us a while to build our circulation back up, but with the quality product we are now putting out, it will be easier.

Q: What do you hear from readers?

A: I hear from readers all the time, most of it good news. They like the new look,



THE PUBLISHER

they like the new graphics, they like the way that we're doing a better job of handling the local news.

Q: How has the newsroom changed?

A: I think the change in the newsroom has been remarkable. I think everyone there feels better about their job, how they do things, how they relate to people. And I think it's spilled over into other departments, too. I think there is more continuity, I think there is more teamwork, and I think there's a different atmosphere that's starting to be set for the newspaper in total.

MAESTRO, Continued from page 6

some time, whenever possible, to schedule a planning meeting. I'll try to find out about a planning session a day in advance so schedules can be coordinated.

Q: What problems did you face at first?

A: No one likes change. Newspaper people are skeptics — that's exactly what makes them so good at what they do. But the traits that come in so handy when interviewing sources aren't exactly ones that make staffers jump at the chance to reorganize a newsroom. No one wants to fail. No one wants to look stupid. And if it

ain't broke, they say, don't fix it. Reporters will say, "I can't write headlines." Photographers will say, "I don't have time for another meeting." Designers (or copy editors) will say, "I don't see what part I play in this." And even management might be leery to rock the boat.

You have to give them logic — solid problems and solutions. You have to be patient — explaining things time and time again, sometimes one on one. At times, you have to be coercive, cajoling. And when the packages start appearing, and the positive feedback comes, and the paper looks better and better, and the staff starts feeling like they have some control over what they do, they'll work with you.

"The maestro project, along with the changes we've made in the editorial department, have really not increased cost significantly, but we've been able to improve the quality of the product immensely, and I think that's very important for publishers and other newspapers to know."

Bill Blake
Publisher

PHAROS-TRIBUNE
Logansport,
Indiana

TIM HERD

Occupation: Insurance Agent

"The Pharos-Tribune has seen dramatic change in its format and in its physical presentation in the last one to two years. We are seeing our local headlines on the front page. What is of special interest to the people of Logansport and Cass County is now front-page news.



"I wrote a letter to tell the editor I was very proud having read that the paper had received awards from the so-called experts. But I wanted him to know that the expert who has to buy the paper every day likes the paper, too."

.....

MARY ELLEN MULL

Occupation: Retired

"I have read the paper for a long time. I remember when there were two papers in town.

"I think the way the paper is laid out now—in boxes and in different types of formations—makes it easier for us to spot the news."



.....

DEE ANN DANIELS

Occupation: Schoolteacher

"I can remember times when it seemed like you could read the paper in five minutes. I haven't been able to do that lately. I find that I am spending more time reading more stories in more different sections than I used to because the coverage is simply broader and the application to the community is made clearer."



THE READERS

MIKE McCORD

Occupation: Owner of Logansport Lumber Do-It Center

"It just seems more locally focused in general than before. I think before they were trying to prove that they were a worldly newspaper. And now maybe they found their niche and said, 'Hey, this is a small town and we've got some small-town news.'"



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HERB PRICE

Occupation: Optometrist

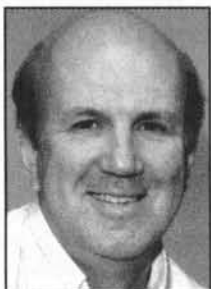
"Oh, yeah, I think the change is tremendous. It's a lot easier to read the paper now. The color and the highlights of the main ideas in articles make it easier to scan the paper."



DAVE LONG City / Police Writer

"I've been in the newspaper business for 27 years, I've been through a lot of different changes, and this is the most positive change I think that we've ever had at this paper.

"Traditionally, photographers have their ideas and reporters have their ideas, and they don't mix too well at times. And you also have people coming in and saying to the reporter, 'Why don't you ask this question?' But the reporter is thinking, 'It's my story—leave me alone.' But once you get into this maestro system, it doesn't become an adversarial thing—it becomes cooperative. And it makes the writer more creative because it gives you more to work with."



AMY BELL Regional Reporter

"My stories are more well-rounded because of input from photo and layout people, who may see things that I miss. Likewise I have input on the photos and graphics that go with my story—input I didn't have before.

"Writing my own headlines and checking cutlines means greater accuracy. Writing headlines first frees up my leads to do something a little different because the reader knows what the story is about from the headline.

"Planning sheets can be used as a guide when I write a story, and that's especially helpful if there are a couple of weeks of lag time between planning the story, doing the interviews and writing the story. The only major breakdown in the system is that all the players don't always get copies of the planning sheet."



DAVE KITCHELL Government Writer

"The obvious strength of the concept is the planning, but there are byproducts that aren't as evident:

*Insurance. Rather than taking a stab at a story, it offers some guarantee that a viable, appealing product will be produced, even on the slowest of news days.



THE NEWSROOM

*Focus. The concept provides a better understanding for staff members who may not be aware of underlying newsroom goals for a story— problems that need to be addressed in a controversy or issues that should be considered.

*Interaction. It has brought together different people in the newsroom to talk about stories and issues they cover, and in many cases, these people would never share those ideas in another setting.

"There are a few weaknesses of the maestro process. Space limitations often mean that a well-planned graphic, picture, sidebar or information box is cut."

JOHN CHASE Regional Reporter

"To me, a newcomer, I think it has helped this paper in making strong front pages with strong packages that dominate the paper. When someone sees a package on our front page that dominates three-fourths of the page, it seems to say, 'Read this, because it's important.' With more of these strong local packages, it seems we can boost our local readership."

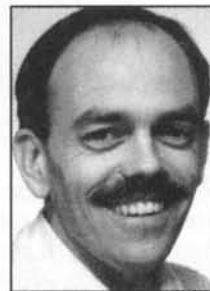


STEVE SUMMERS Photo Editor

"I think the new planning process has enhanced the creativity a great deal in the writing, photography and layout of the paper. Having been here for nine years, I've seen a lot of changes and I think that this process has far and away had the most positive impact.

"It has cut down on mileage, film use and chemistry, and wasted time. It gives Arnold and Andy more time to produce creative, top-notch photos.

"From a paginator's standpoint, the planning process gives the page designer the time and opportunity to be more creative in presenting and enhancing the story and photographs."



ANDY LAVALLEY

Photographer

"I used to really look forward to my gas mileage reimbursement check because it used to be a pretty decent size. The checks have gone down probably a third because we don't have to spend so much time looking for feature photos."



ARNOLD ERNEST

Photographer

"People are more relaxed now—there aren't the turf battles that we used to have. The blood pressure is not as high as it used to be. Reporters are more open to suggestions, and you don't have to worry about stepping on people's toes to get something done."

"I had a story idea about a guy with a llama farm around here that I had tried to get in the paper for two years. Then when we started with the Idea Group meetings, I brought it up—and the story was in the paper within two weeks."



JERRY MOREHOUSE

Front Page Designer

"Before we started the system, we were interested mostly in our use of color. But sometimes we were using color photos that were there only for the sake of color. Since we've gone to the system, I think the emphasis has been more on information."

"I think the maestro system has definitely improved the accuracy of our headlines."



GREG McCLURE

Wire Editor

"One of the next avenues we need to explore in this process is the possibility of planned packages for inside pages. Instead of picking a main story for page one and then saying, 'Use anything else inside,' now we can ask for extra space and then sit down and decide exactly what stories, photos and graphics to use."



JEFF MAJESKE

Sports Editor

"The maestro process is used primarily for our Sports Extra pages, which usually have a feature on a local athlete or team. I have found the planning process to be useful because it brings more ideas and thoughts into play before anything is done. The only bugaboo is finding a time that is best for all."



SEAN SPENCE

Sports Writer

"To a neophyte like me, the planning process seems less a revolutionary overturning of traditional newspaper staff hierarchy than a logical, effective way to be certain the story the reporter wants to tell is the same one the photographer and the designer want to tell."

"I found that the planning sessions helped me in two ways—I was forced to put my hands on the formless blob of putty-like ideas I had about a story and I was introduced to the idea of thinking about a story on a page."



GREG JONES

Sports Writer

"The communication between writer, photographer and paginator obviously is essential for a good package and story. If we really need a totally new system to get us to talk to each other, then we are probably in trouble. I am not saying the process does not work, because it does. But maybe we already had this (communication capability) and just didn't know it."



MARGO MAROCCO

Business Editor

"The planning sessions have resulted in more finely tuned or focused stories, frequently sending my original story ideas in directions I hadn't considered. Input helps to keep a story on a more objective plane. Not unlike an orchestra, each additional instrument involved in the production adds to the overall richness of the final presentation."



NANCY NEWMAN

Feature Writer

"The first time I heard about the maestro system, I will admit I was less than enthusiastic (Are they crazy? How can we know the focus, lay it out and write a headline before we've even done the interview?). Now I have become a staunch supporter of the system."



"After 15 years as a reporter, I think the stories I've written this past year are among the best I've ever done. Sometimes I go out of the planning session with a story idea that's totally different from what I went in with— but it's always been better."

DEB SAINÉ

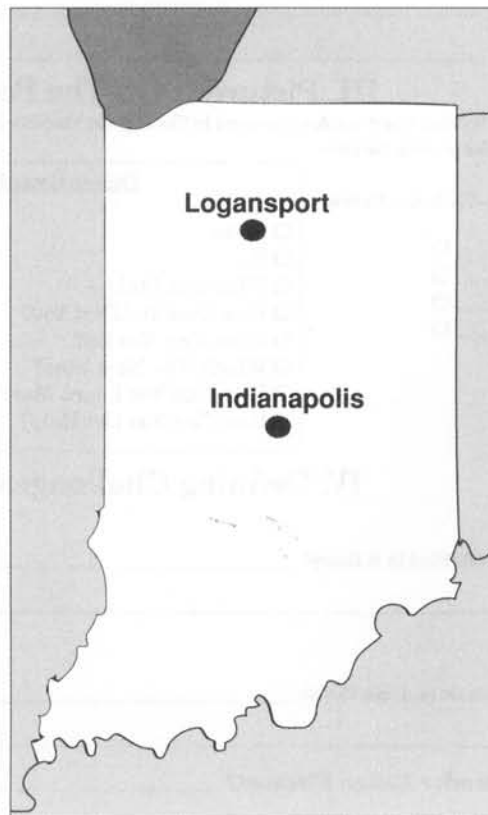
Lifestyle Editor

"Overall I think that sitting down to plan out stories in advance is a smart idea—as in most situations, two heads, or in this case anywhere from two to four heads, is better than one. Planning stories gives the feature article balance and direction."



"One major plus for the system is the fact that you know as a writer just what is expected of you—therefore, after you write the story, the chances of being told to start again from the beginning becomes slim."

"There needs to be flexibility in the system because no amount of planning prepares you for just exactly what your interview is going to be like."



We want to have the writers write in the same chronology that the readers read. That means doing display type first: headlines, decks, pull quotes, cutlines and the like.

The main reader questions are answered in display type (and edited as a package) so the writer is free to tell a story with the text lead.

Pharos-Tribune Story Plan

Story Slug _____ Projected Run Date _____

Special Deadlines _____ Copy: _____ Art: _____

Story Idea _____

Reporter _____

Display Editor _____

Photographer _____

**Think
Like A
Reader**

I. Reader's Questions

1. Why should I Care?

Your Best Answer _____

Other Questions That Immediately Come To Mind

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

II. Refine The Angle

1. What is the single most important element in the story?

2. Headline Ideas:

A. Main Head _____

B. Subhead/Summary Graph _____

III. Picture It On The Page

Sketch Presentation So Readers Questions Are Answered In The Highest-Visibility Points. Decide on Best Tool-Type, Photo, Artwork or Graphic to make the point.

Checklist for High-Visibility Points

- 1 Head/Deck
- 2. Caption
- 3. Pull Quote
- 4. List

Other Graphic Elements

- Q&A
- Facts
- Bio
- What's At Stake
- How Does It Affect You?
- What Can You Do?
- What's The Next Step?
- How Can You Learn More?
- How Can You Get Help?

IV. Defining Challenges

1. Reporting

A. What Do We Need To Find In A Hurry? _____

2. Photo

A Ideas For One Photo Or Multiple Photos. _____

3. Was There A Reader Action Element? _____



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Buck Ryan
Northwestern University
Medill School of Journalism
1845 Sheridan Road
Evanston, Illinois 60208
(708) 491-2067

PHAROS-TRIBUNE
517 E. Broadway
Logansport, Indiana 46947
(219) 722-5000

ASNE Foundation
P.O. Box 4090
Reston, Virginia 22090
(703) 648-1144

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