

Our Value Proposition

TOP DEAD CENTER

Content

We've recently had a couple of quotes posted on the refrigerator at Diesel — our most reliable form of internal communications. While “inspirational” messages usually aren't (and generally say more about the person posting it than the message itself), we thought, in a changing media world, these had some value.

From Arthur Sulzberger of the *New York Times*: “We are not in the ink-on-paper business, we are in the news business. It doesn't matter how we distribute information. What matters is we can make money from it.”

The irony of course being that the *Times* is struggling mightily with the last sentence.

The other is from Peggy Noonan, former Reagan speechwriter, and now an extremely literate, insightful *WSJ* columnist. We like her, a lot.

“This is true: fact is king. Information is king. Great reporting is what every honest person wants now, it's the one ironic thing we have less of in journalism than we need. But if I were doing a business model ... I'd say: Fact and data are our product, we're putting everything into reporting, that's what we're selling, interpretation is the reader's job.”

What both are talking about is content, editorial content. And content is disappearing all around us. At a rapid rate. There are more channels, but strangely, less quality of editorial content.

A lot of trade magazines are being bought up by larger companies right now, and one of the first things that gets tossed out the window in such deals is editorial. It is certainly a cheaper, er, less expensive way to publish.

Recently, a Group VP of a newly merged “media group” haughtily told us that if an article couldn't go in three to five of his magazines, it was worthless to him. “It's just filler around the ads.”

Whoa. Goose bumps. Look of amazed disbelief.

We are admittedly old school. Maybe ancient school. We labor under the odd assumption that if people take the time to open a magazine (either print or digital) or go online, they want to read something they can't get somewhere else. Websites count unique visitors, we think in terms of unique content.

But content ain't cheap. And good editorial content is flat-out expensive.

If it's something you can read in 10 other places, who cares about the source you get it from? At that point, you don't even know, much less care, if you're reading it on Yahoo!, Reuters or Wikipedia.

We don't think you're looking to *Diesel Progress* for bullet-pointed three paragraph new engine “stories.” We haven't just breathlessly discovered that mobile hydraulics is used in off-highway equipment. And we don't think CARB is something found in food.

We think you're looking for specific product, technology and industry news, with a dose of perspective. Information you can't get everywhere else and in some cases, anywhere else.

We think that's our “mission statement.” That is, if we had a mission statement.

We really don't know how to do it any other way.

Nor do we want to. **dp**



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