

Management

While values and visions have their place in news organizations, so do goals, plans, measurements and short-term results. What techniques do you use to keep day-to-day issues moving ahead, with consistency and follow-up?

Dick Wald

Don't bear grudges. It's the simplest, best advice I can give anybody for managing anything. Don't bear a grudge. You have a fight, you have an argument, whatever, that's yesterday's business. We can go on. We can do it again on a different route.

Ben Bradlee

The most fun I had was interrupting ... [reporters] talking, whatever they were talking about. I made it a point to tour the office at least twice a day. Not just little tours — an hour and a half, two hours.

Jack Fuller

(Attorney General) Edward Levi used to hold events. We'd have everybody down for dinner at the Justice Department — wives, spouses, and sometimes kids — or he'd take everybody off to Camp David.

Edward was not a party animal, to say the least. I said, "I'm just sort of amazed at all these social events that you put on. Why do you do that?" And he said, "Well, how else do people know that they're all part of something ... if you just put them in their jobs where they have their game face on. They won't really feel like they're all together in a common cause. You have to get them in other settings where they begin to see each other as humans, and when you do that, they're much more likely to behave well toward one another in the work setting."

To me as a young man, it seemed like an odd observation. Yet I can't tell you how important that's been.

William Hearst III

I remember talking (to the author and highly decorated military man) David

Hackworth. He told me that when he was a captain he had to send people up a hill where they wouldn't necessarily come back. I always thought if I failed as a manager, maybe people would get fired. But when people in those (military) circumstances fail, they lose their lives. I asked David what he considered the [essence] of leading people. And he said to me, "Remembering the guy's wife's name." He went on to say that if you can convince people that you care about them just that much, it's amazing what they will do for you.

Alberto Ibarguen

We've got a guy who is one of my personal heroes. He came into a very messy situation where we had a number of years of awful production. We went from 30 percent on-time truck dispatch to 98 percent on time in the course of two years. And he didn't do it by magic; he did it one step at a time. Every day he'd have a staff meeting.

He'd bring [the staff] together, forcing them to stop, forcing them to articulate what they were doing and why — and then holding people accountable the next day.

Nancy Maynard

I tend to be more than a bit of a perfectionist. I had to learn that about myself as a manager. I want to get it right. Eventually I discovered the best and easiest way to do that: Find the right people to do the job.

More times than not, the right answer will come out of it.

A more important lesson I've learned is: Watch the cash. No matter what else happens, watch the cash.

Tim McGuire

When I'm dealing with you, the most important person in the world is you. I can't be thinking about the interests of the *Star Tribune* or the interests of ASNE. Those interests are not paramount to you. Your interests are paramount to you. If I understand that, if I really keep that front and center, we're going to be able to work to a place. That doesn't mean that [we] are always [in agreement], but it means that I always respect you and have affection for you as a human being. When I make the other person the center of the game, things usually work.



For many years, I used to say being an editor is like being a hockey goalie. You try to prevent something bad from happening. Several years ago, I came to the conclusion that the metaphor was all wrong.

Now I try to think of myself — and get my fellow editors to think — of being assist leaders. We need to assist people in succeeding. If we create the environment in which people can succeed, we're in a lot better place.

Sandy Rowe

I have not broken away from e-mail nearly to the extent that I think I should. It can drive you much more than the in-box did. It's just there. It's almost like a ringing telephone to me.

I don't initiate many e-mails. I probably use e-mails more to do things in journalism around the country than I do with my own staff. I have a rule. I never deliver criticism by e-mail. If I catch wind of someone else doing it, I correct them right away.



When I first came to Portland eight years ago, the newsroom had been a very top-down newsroom. And so we completely changed the newsroom organization. We created reporting teams around subjects. We had those people sitting together. We used the news staff to define the most important subjects we should be covering that we weren't.

I never deliver criticism by e-mail. If I catch wind of someone else doing it, I correct them right away.

And one day we posted 110 new jobs that the newsroom had been very involved in defining, but people had to apply. Most change in newsrooms is incremental — and sometimes too incremental to make a difference. So part of what we did was intentionally change dramatically, to change the culture, and to get everyone out of his or her comfort zone.



[In 2001] we won two Pulitzer Prizes. And the very next week, we had a new reporter who had joined us about six months [earlier]. He's covering the environment, is incredibly productive and with high-impact stories. I asked him to lead a session on how to come into an organization and develop a beat in a way that had immediate impact. And we sent notes to the staff and told them what it was, and I sent a special note encouraging new people and young people to come.

Well, I walked in, and three Pulitzer Prize winners were sitting in that session to hear the wisdom of a new reporter who had been there less than six months. That's a [learning] culture. That's the kind of environment that you can build in a newsroom.

Neal Shapiro

The key (to managing several nights of "Dateline") was breaking the jobs down into manageable chunks and making sure that you had a key person at each chunk. Try to spend time with each chunk now and then. Just to stop in and say, "OK, how is it going?" I thought part of my job was a little bit like the mayor. I had to be visible.

Matt Storrin

A little tolerance goes a long way. If they're talented people — and when the bell rings, they get the job done — I'm going to have more tolerance than for somebody who I don't think is working up to potential.

The other thing I learned generally in dealing with journalists — something that I learned later rather than earlier — is you don't have to win every conversation. Especially when you have the power.

Mark Whitaker

I met a management trainer. I had a pretty healthy skepticism about that whole line of work, but we actually became friends.

A lot of executives
have these comfort areas, things they're
particularly good at. They spend too much
time doing that.

He said more managers and executives get in trouble for the over-use of their strengths than for their weaknesses. Everybody's constantly thinking about, where am I weak? What are my deficiencies? But the real problem is that a lot of executives have these comfort areas, things they're particularly good at. They spend too much time doing that.

Karen Jurgensen

I learned that the best way to hire is to ask people to go through written exercises.

In the context of the editorial page, we have people do a critique of, say, a week's worth of editorial pages. We have them try to poke holes in the editorials.

I don't ever hire anybody on the spot. It's a long, laborious process. There are stages. ... People say they are interested in a job, I spend a little bit of time talking with them. Then I give them whatever the exercise is. [I ask them to] give me a dozen ideas for editorials and also write a sample editorial for me. If they get over that hurdle, then they get in for another interview. ...

One of the things I pay a lot of attention to at *USA TODAY* is our culture. I have not wanted to import the culture of some other organizations.

I pay attention to how people will fit in with the group and whether they have the same values that we do.

Then, of course, you do all the reference checking and the clip reading.

Dick Wald

The first and the most effective thing that I have found dealing with people, both in print and in television, is crying. Crying and begging. It works a lot of the time. ...

You've got a tie, jacket and all sort of things, and you start crying, people will pay some attention. If that doesn't work, you can try intimidation, you can try silence, you can try all kinds of things.