Public Abstract

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Graduation Term:FS 2017

Department:Journalism

Degree:MA

Title:Behind the Screens: How Magazines Organize for Digital Success

Change has dominated the media landscape for nearly two decades as digital content creation and delivery mushroomed from the work of secluded upstarts to that of society-influencing giants. Magazine publishers have found varying levels of success in this digital age. Some have thrived; others have folded. This research aims to determine factors that fuel digital success by examining the internal practices of three successful magazine digital operations. Data was gathered through interviews of editorial staff within the digital organizations of Better Homes and Gardens, The Hollywood Reporter and New York, and analyzed for common themes.

Most striking to come out of this research was the importance of people. These magazine divisions thrived due to passionate, smart employees and visionary, involved leaders. This builds upon previous research in the field about the value of a company's human resources and effective leadership. Also interesting was that success was defined broadly—in part as quantitative measures, but also as continually pushing forward, as effective teamwork and as supporting the brand's value in consumers' lives. Experimentation was part of the work culture, and also was built into the nature of serving content to audiences in a digital space. And through it all, brand identity was intertwined in almost every facet of the work, and it fueled strategic goals and employees' passion.