

PROGRAM SUMMARY

The Sentinel – Behind the Scenes: An In-Depth Look at Media Relations

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October 17, 2013 at 8:30 a.m. / Carlisle, PA

How to stay relevant in today's ever-changing market was the theme that resonated throughout our October program, which was led by Mark Heintzelman, Publisher; Jackie Cox, Director of Sales; and Jeff Pratt, Managing Editor of *The Sentinel*.

Stay Relevant

Mark kicked off the meeting by sharing the challenges *The Sentinel's* staff faces as one of a small group of daily newspapers in the region during a time when the newspaper business is being perceived as a dying industry.

In business for 152 years, *The Sentinel* has not just survived but is actually thriving. How? By constantly innovating and remaining on the cutting edge of print and electronic media. Mark said that *The Sentinel's* staff has a unique opportunity to help mold the future of how people in the region consume news.

He stated the key to *The Sentinel's* success has been to stay relevant. Here are a few examples:

- It produces 100 print products.
- It boasts eight new feature sections per week.
- It launched Midstate Digital Communities online, allowing visitors to search news items by city.
- It has a content sharing agreement with abc27

More than a Newspaper

From an advertising perspective, Jackie shared that changing technology affects how the publication deals with its advertisers, as well as how it works on all different platforms. Current social media channels have allowed *The Sentinel* to reach new people. Because the publication is part of a larger company (it is owned by Lee Enterprises, Inc.) it is able to offer numerous programs and new offerings tailored to individual businesses' goals. Examples include:

- Better engagement via Facebook and Twitter
- Search engine optimization
- Website design
- Management of social media outlets
- Resources like "Branding in a Digital Age" Partner Workbook



Jeff Pratt shares with attendees the importance of answering the question "Will readers care about my topic?"

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What Readers Want

Jeff provided the following overview for consideration when submitting news information to *The Sentinel*:

- News value is #1
- The newsroom receives 200-300 emails per day
- Sell the newsroom staff on why its readers will care about your topic
- Be clear – focus on Who, What, When, Where, and Why
- Know where the information can go, i.e. News, Business, Community, or Announcements section
- People like to read about people
- Send photos whenever possible; a photo should be attached to an email as a jpg (200 dpi)
- Email your information to the newsroom, then follow up via phone
- Prepare press releases in Word; in the body of your email, briefly explain what your topic is and why it is relevant
- Be a source for the editorial staff; i.e. the current transportation bill is of great interest
- Do you have a local or regional perspective on a national story? Pitch it.
- Op-Eds are valued sources.

Did You Know?

The Sentinel prints 185,000 pieces on a weekly basis. Its website receives 2 million page views per month.

Be sure to check out the attached document, which outlines additional considerations when submitting information to a media company.

Other Points of Interest

- *The Sentinel* received the "2013 America East Best Community Website/Best Homepage" award
- Employing approximately 50 people, *The Sentinel* prints and delivers the publications from its facility on East North Street in Carlisle

First-hand Look

Following the program, attendees were invited to tour the facility, including its newsroom, CTP (computer-to-plate) room, press room, and mail room.

Thank you to everyone who attended this event!



Attendees visit the press room during the facility tour



The Sentinel's printing press

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