

Staff Photographer  
Andrew Innerarity.

## SUCCESS STORY

### South Florida Sun-Sentinel: A Robust Training Program Gains Focus

#### RESULTS

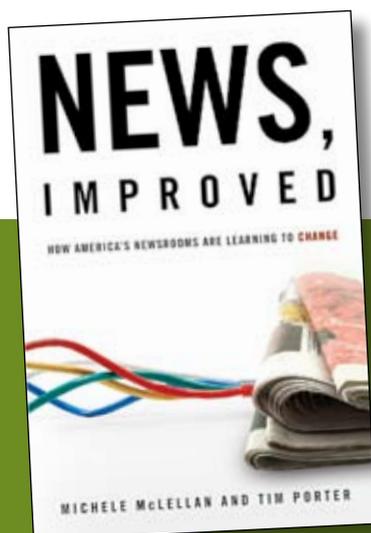
The Sun-Sentinel's Earl Maucker, Editor & Publisher's Editor of the Year, says training is an integral part of his multimedia newsroom's current and future success.

"Newsrooms must change. They need to change dramatically. The culture needs to change. Our skills need to change. The way we approach our job needs to change. And the only way to effectively do that is to make sure you've got training to accompany all of those changes," says Maucker, editor and senior vice president of the Ft. Lauderdale-based newspaper.

Editor & Publisher honored Maucker in January 2006 for "his leadership in growing the newspaper's readership and integrating marketing efforts – while nurturing aggressive watchdog journalism that was recognized by winning three finalists spots in the 2006 Pulitzer Prizes," the magazine said.

The Sun-Sentinel partnered with Tomorrow's Workforce in 2005 with a goal of making a generous training program more strategic and goals-focused. The newsrooms integrated approach to learning has included:

- Leadership training for senior editors and department heads.
- A six-month program of craft and management training for frontline editors
- An intensive program that partners one editor, one reporter and a writing coach to improve collaboration and promote innovation.
- Ongoing training on key topics such as critical thinking and beat basics.



#### FROM *NEWS, IMPROVED*:

"From writing to editing, to midcareer updates to looking for new ways to innovate and reach new audiences, training is a strategically important area for us."

— Earl Maucker, vice president and editor



Features Copy Editor Gail Gedan Spencer (standing) works with Features Design Editor Susana Sanchez while Assistant Features Desk Chief Dina Cappillo Niblock works in the background.

“The newspaper is willing to help me grow.”

— *Jean-Paul Renaud,*  
staff writer

## IMPLEMENTING CHANGE

The South Florida Sun-Sentinel is a respected newspaper in a lively, competitive market. With the demands of rapidly evolving media and changing reader expectations, the Sun-Sentinel wanted to ensure that its newsroom had the necessary resources to adapt to new market conditions.

The Sun-Sentinel was striving for consistency in excellence – “more days of brilliance” – when it asked Tomorrow’s Workforce to help the newsroom build a comprehensive training program. The newspaper already had a commitment to training, as evidenced by its strong existing program, led by Gail Bulfin, editor for news research, training and readership. “Training,” said Maucker, “is critical to our goals.”

In February 2005, a team of TW representatives visited the Sun-Sentinel and interviewed dozens of staffers, ranging from senior editors to reporters. The staff had many ideas about what would help them be more successful, including better communication, a focus on retaining and rewarding strong staff members and more collaboration among the newsroom staff.

Based on the data collected, TW made the following recommendations:

- Offer ongoing training in change management for the senior leadership team.
- Work toward improving communication.
- Specify editorial goals built around no more than a handful of priorities.

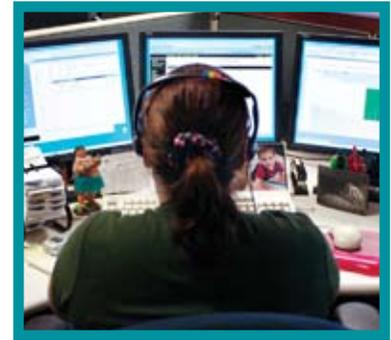
To address change management, Maucker and Managing Editor Sharon Rosenhouse brought in leadership consultant Edward Miller to work intensively with the senior team and department heads. The sessions Miller conducted allowed the leaders to spend time with each other, away from the daily routine, and helped them focus on common goals for the paper.

With the leadership training in place, the Sun-Sentinel turned its attention to an issue that had come up in the TW surveys: Editors were not talking enough about writing. In early 2006, the Sun-Sentinel started the Learning Cell project, which brings an editor and a reporter together with writing coach Mary Ann Hogan to discuss ideas and forms for stories in the works. The program's intent was to give personal attention to the reporter and editor, to develop communication and to improve the writing in the newspaper.

While the project is fairly new, it seems to be reaching those goals. About a dozen people have been through the program, and there is a waiting list of future participants. "It has created quite a buzz from others who want to be involved," Bulfin said.

In addition to implementing new training programs, the Sun-Sentinel also re-focused on popular existing ones. The paper continued its ACES class for assistant editors, which was described by participants in glowing terms and which Bulfin called "very empowering." In addition to managing and editing, the program helps participants learn about themselves and understand how others do their jobs.

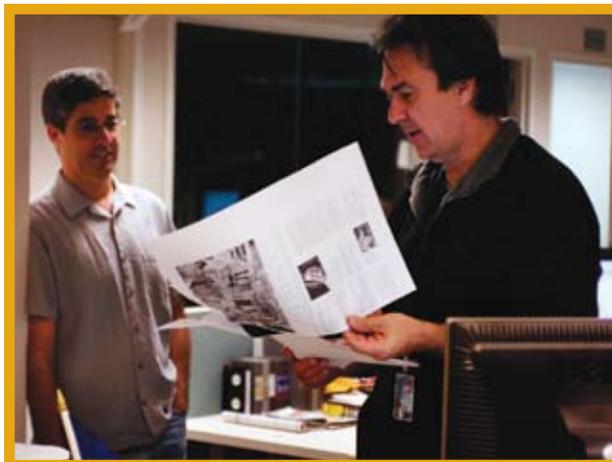
Although Sun-Sentinel has a full plate of training opportunities, Bulfin believes more needs to be done. She says that through TW she has learned the importance of follow-up. "Follow. Follow. Follow. Follow. You can't do things once and have them stick."



Assistant Director of Photography Taimy Alvarez at her work station.

"For people to go through authentic change, they have to have an environment that supports that. There has been authentic change in that (the Ft. Lauderdale) newsroom."

— Mary Ann Hogan,  
Sun-Sentinel writing coach



Senior Staff Photographer Mike Stocker (left) and Staff Writer Tim Collie looking over a portion of their AIDS Orphans project.



**JUST THE FACTS:**

Newspaper:

**South Florida Sun-Sentinel**

Daily Circulation (M-F):

**222,183\***

Number of Employees:

**350**

Ownership:

**Tribune Company**

URL:

**[www.sun-sentinel.com](http://www.sun-sentinel.com)**

\* Audit Bureau of Circulations  
(Total Avg Paid Circ.) 9/30/06

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ARE LEARNING TO CHANGE**

As news organizations adapt to a changing media landscape, strategic learning is critical for organizations that want to increase their audiences and maintain journalistic quality. *News, Improved: How America's Newsrooms Are Learning to Change* looks at research and development from \$10 million in training projects sponsored by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation to show how leadership, goal-setting and staff development improve the culture of the newsroom and the content of the news product – both key drivers of audience appeal. Learn how American newsrooms are becoming more adaptive and creative, fueled by continuous, strategic training.

**TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE**

With support from more than 50 journalism organizations, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation created Tomorrow's Workforce in 2003 to demonstrate how investments in training and professional development for mid-career journalists can improve the quality and appeal of journalism. Working with 17 newspapers, the project has developed a strategic approach to training that has helped newsrooms train more effectively and document the impact of training.

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