

How to manage new media growth

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One of the problems for media organisations trying to go online over the last few years has been slowness on the part of managers. Some senior managers will see that it is strategically vital, but middle managers in particular, will often be reluctant to innovate. Why?

A leading media entrepreneur I met today had an interesting answer. Like me, he used to think that it was cultural. Journalists don't like change, we are comfortable with the ways we used to do things. We feel threatened by the anarchy of the Internet and all that nasty user generated content.

But hang on a minute. In the past journalists have proven themselves to be very adept at using new technology as it comes along. The telegram, telephone, film, video, mobiles, PCs were adopted quickly and exploited cleverly. So why is Online different?

My media magnate friend thinks it is that many companies failed to incentivise managers. In fact they did the opposite. They told the managers to take the business online. All the managers could see was a threat. This Online business would drain their budgets and take audiences and staffing away from the main shows. That would mean no annual bonus.

The way it worked for this news businessman was when he removed the disincentives. He allocated extra online budgets and made all the online targets part of the main business proposition. All the Online people were placed at desks alongside their broadcast colleagues.

As he put it, "we moved from a broadcast and Online strategy to simply having a Media Strategy".

He is now number one in his part of Europe.

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