Chip Giller, Grist

Strategic Planning Interview

**What Organizations Have You Joined?**

ONA, NewsFoo, SEJ—we haven’t been systematic at that. Sometimes we’ve done exchanges on the tech side, where someone will embed themselves. We’re on WP so we do WP trainings. On social media, our two-person team is in touch with other folks on FB algorithm, etc.

Use we could get is this learning or doing with fellow members and growing as a team as a result.

Grist still feels breathless and so we aren’t as systematic about this stuff as we would like to be. The Media Consortium, at the beginning, I sent an editor, and then they asked us to be on the board, but we didn’t participate. At the beginning, it was too overtly lefty. At that time we were working with Yahoo! And there was less voice in our writing.

Then, it didn’t seem what we could get out of it. I’m more into training stuff than the team.

**How has the Climate Desk worked?**

Clever fundraising vehicle for MJ. We and they benefit the most and participate the most. What was interesting was the opportunity to partner with Atlantic, Slate, Wired—not just reach, but mission, to get enviro stuff into those outlets. It was the caliber of the participants that really attracted us. They don’t ask us about the direction of this.

We want to figure out how to work with PolicyMic, and how to work with SplitSider. We are often trying to partner with folks that might be reaching an audience that has some relationship to our content and might become our readers if they were to know about us. We try to go broader, rather than deeper.

In reality we tend to partner with one other outlet. The more parties that get involved, the more complex it is to pull something off.

**Editorial/Business**

Because I started editorial and then moved to business, I am the lightning rod for both. We have never been swayed by the business side. I’ve never sold perspective. We do sometimes get sponsorship.

By having a singular focus, it is a strength, because we have a defined set of funders.

**Growing Your Team**

Learning best practices, what has succeeded and what has failed, especially in terms of audience engagement and growth. Like CMS or social media and what works best. How to raise money, how to lead.

TMC share the mission thing that ONA members don’t share, so the way that Gawker does things is not what would work for our type of sites.

Most Media Consortium members have audiences that are already deeply converted and also small.

**Throw up AAN**

In aggregate, that would be great; one by one, that would be exhausting.

**TMC**

If we disappeared, I’d have regret, but operationally we would not suffer.