Don’t see INN and TMC as competitive

The advantage of TMC is that all of your members have come out and said, yes, we are progressive. They are not hiding behind a veneer of impartiality. They don’t have an agenda, but an alignment. There are funders and philanthropists who want to support your perspective as a counterpoint to the significant amount of money sunk into the right.

What’s interesting is that sometimes TMC feels like an INN with a progressive group and sometimes like an agenda-setting transparent organization that wants to move a certain line of thinking forward.

The commonality is not the type of product or structure of organizations but the perspective, and that perspective has greater appeal to consumers than investigative journalism does.

You are a representative of the membership and the membership runs the board. I am more of a representative of the movement and the members’ influence on the board is structurally limited. I don’t need to go back to the members and say, is this something you want to do. As a result, I’ve gone down roads that were really unfruitful. On the other hand, we can be more nimble, we can experiment quickly, we can try and fail. There are pluses and minuses. It’s a different culture.

For example, the TMC approach to impact measurement. Because you are doing it, I don’t have to do it. You can leverage some of what I’m doing. We are complementary, and we should coordinate on the leadership level even if the agenda is different.

That’s a good thing. If there weren’t any difference, we would hear from the funders that we should get together. I have not heard that.

Other Associations:

LION is a great example of a missed opportunity. They didn’t take the guidance of funders, and so their funding is abyssmal.

You are a counterpoint to the Franklin Center. You have some long-lived well established brands, so people get it right away. I don’t think you are like anyone else. You are halfway between LION and INN, but I think you are unique. You are not grouped around what you do, but your perspective, where you come from.

In the fight for eyeballs, you have more going for you in that way. We should all be focusing more on citizens/consumers and not on the landscape or funders.

Here is why a progressive, reliable source of information is important to this country—that’s a better pitch than the investigative pitch.

If TMC was better funded than its members, it gets difficult. I get grumbling from my smaller members because we are getting money. Unlike in the tech space, in the content space people hang on by their fingernails for as long as they can. I want 35 members who are scalable, not 100 members who are barely alive. You can’t be broad and deep.

We’ve got to stop comparing ourselves to each other, and start comparing ourselves to our objectives. What is our objective? How will we know we are successful? What does that look like?

If there was one thing you could push for, it would be more autonomy for the director.

INN started as an association, but we are increasingly a services organization. It’s value and also revenue.

Logan, IRE, NICAR