

Psychology of Editorial Leadership VS Management

Dr Swati Singh, Psychologist

Rajiv Singh, Académician & Journalist

Abstract

Several of the speakers discussed the difference the difference between leadership and management. Typically this is that leaders engage in the higher functions of running the organization, while managers handle the more mundane tasks. But I think it's all about semantics. Successful and effective leaders and managers must do the same things. They need to set direction for followers and the organization, motivate, develop good working relationships with followers, be positive role models, and focus on goals. There was a time when the editor of a newspaper or any other mediums of communication used to be the final authority as to what would be the content of that newspaper. With changing times, the management began taking all the decisions. Be it the content or the inclination towards a particular news, the owner has the final word. Now, big conglomerates and corporate majors have taken over as the owners of media houses. As a result, they have also started mixing business with journalism, as can be seen from the fact that editors have been given a set policy, made by the management, to strictly adhere to. In a nutshell, management has now taken over and editors don't have the final say over the content of a newspaper.

Introduction:

The Effects of Ownerships

But this sort of arrangement of big businesses ruling over newspapers is also a matter of concern. India in recent years has become hostage to crony capitalism more than it was the case in the past. Simultaneously, the wall that by and large separated editorial and business operations in media companies is now merging. And this is happening to maximize profits, irrespective of the means used, others in the effort to survive in this competitive world. If the media are to be watchdogs for not just governments but also business, and of the interface between the two, do the safeguards exist that will continue to allow the media to play an independent role? But is it reasonable to expect that such safeguards will operate, or just wishful thinking? Since democracies work best when there is countervailing power, does the ownership of significant media companies by large business houses vest too much power in the hands of the

management? What needs to be done is to ensure editorial independence, so that editors do not become puppets of their owners. These are the issues that need to be addressed.

Objective:

There was a time when the editor of a newspaper or any other mediums of communication used to be the final authority as to what would be the content of that newspaper. With changing times, the management began taking all the decisions. Be it the content or the inclination towards a particular news, the owner has the final word.

Description:

The Roles of Editor

An editor is responsible for a steady and continuous inflow of up-to-the-minute news in the newspaper office. Although most of the news supplied is a mechanical process covered by a daily routine by reporters, stringers, freelancers, etc. But like all machinery of news gathering, the news editor is responsible for watching its smooth functioning. He is one of the most important persons, who plans the content of a daily newspaper. Earlier, news editor of a newspaper had the final authority and were considered pivotal in streaming the organization's success. For any national newspaper, an active, intelligent and enterprising news editor should be the vital spark that energizes all the news coverage.

But in this new era of profit making and stiff competition, it seems the management has totally taken over editors and have started putting in their money-minting ways gain profits. For example, if there is a particular business giant who is at fault and the editor is editing a news copy filed by a repeater, the management will make sure the copy is edited in such a way that it gets more aligned towards the businessman. Reason? The newspaper organization gets a fair share of advertisements from the company. This not only results in the person who is at fault, to get an advantage. But we, as readers, also get a biased report on the person.

Suggestions:

The effect of management ruling over each and every editorial decision has taken a toll on healthy journalism. In order to make profits, newer policies are formed, stories are twisted to meet those norms and, as a result, editors are forced to align a particular copy according to the set policies.

There have also been instances of paid news. This too is a result of too much interference of the management on editors and editorial content. It decreases the transparency and subsequent

participation of readers in the news process. The concept of 'paid news' is nothing new. Over a decade ago, the term advertorial came into being in Indian media. As paid advertisements, advertorials masquerade as editorials, making readers believe they are reading a news story. This raises the big question whether such a step should be taken in order to earn profits b the management?

Readers are not just being misled, they are also being devoid of proper news and their rightful information. Management, in its bid to make profits, are over-interfering in the editorial ways. Many a times, even if a person or a political party is at fault, the management forces its editors to tone the effect a bit so that the company doesn't suffer any loss. This has stripped off the editors their freedom of expression. They are constantly monitored by the management and the spirit of journalism is slowly dying.

Conclusion:

Such practice should be stopped to make way for a clean and rightful journalism that exposes the truth and makes everyone aware. It will certainly not be an easy task to check this malpractice. Firstly, it's very difficult to prove that a particular report was published for a consideration or for any type of monetary gain. Also, elaborate guidelines need to be in place, and more importantly, the bodies that act as watchdogs of the media like the Press Council of India (PCI) should be given enough powers so that they can check such malpractices. As it stands today, the PCI cannot take any punitive measures and its powers are limited to passing strictures against erring media houses. Suitable amendments is also required in the Representation of the People Act. Sale of editorial space can be a lucrative business, much more paying than even the Sunday classifieds. All stakeholders, the political parties, editors, the Press Council of India and the Election Commission need to work together for a consensus to prevent business conglomerates, those owning media organizations, from becoming an extension of Public Relations firms.

The bottom line is, for any newspaper organization to be successful, there has to be a marriage between the ideologies of the editor and the management. Unless, the management doesn't think beyond the concepts of money-making, this won't happen. The first priority should always be to make the public aware of the truth. And a piece of news should be represented in all the aspects so as to be fair and do justice to the concept of true journalism.

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