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digital snacks

Before "Mobile First,"
Get your Digital Core in Place

By Calvin Yee

There is a big push among traditional media companies to be "mobile first." But before reaching that milestone, a company has to be fairly far along in digital transformation. A good measure of this is the extent to which the organization has gotten its hands around the role of Head of Digital. In our experience, no one in media or elsewhere has completely cracked this moving target as the role has evolved from evangelist (spreading the word) to narrower capability-builder (be that digital GM, data analytics, product, platforms, etc.). The nature of the role depends on the company's particular

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strategic imperative—and simply imitating digital efforts is not the answer. Many organizations begin with building digital as a standalone unit. This may get things off the ground, but for maximum impact, digital needs to be embedded in all areas and drive the organization as a whole. It has to be part of the day-to-day routine.

More often than not, getting there is an organizational challenge rather than a strategic one. Here's the classic scenario we see time and again:

- Your strategy is crystallizing, but points to an organization whose product, distribution and monetization are digital—clearly your organization needs to be digital, too.

- The organization has been ultra-siloed, a battle between the voice of the product (editorial), the voice of the advertiser (commercial), with digital set up as the voice of the consumer

- This structure guarantees tensions, which can't be resolved if your culture is uncomfortable with overt confrontation

If this sounds familiar, the implications are clear: De-silo the organization, put digital at the core and clarify everyone's role in that digital reality. Then, and only then, can we talk about putting mobile first.

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