

1.4 PAGE ONE NEWS JUDGMENT

Like editors, designers function as gatekeepers for the readers. Designers help determine what readers will perceive as more important, more worthy of their attention. By placing some stories higher up on the page, the story achieves more prominence, and, presumably, more attention. Especially at smaller papers, designers may, themselves, have to determine what stories get the most play.

DIRECTIONS: Answer a few questions about your paper, The Bugle-Beacon, and the community it serves.

1. Who is the target audience for your paper? That is, who do you perceive are your primary readers?

2. Tell me a little about your readers, average age, average family income, average education, typical occupation, hobbies, etc.

OK, now rank the following stories 1 - 10, with 1 being the story that will appear at the top of page one of the Sept. 20 edition of The Bugle-Beacon. Only a few stories can actually be printed on page one. Be prepared to defend your choices in a small group.

- _____ a. The principal of the only local high school in the area has been seen in Belize scuba diving. According to public records, he did not take vacation time for the trip and informed the superintendent that he was going to research new educational methods. It's unclear whether or not the school district paid for any or all of the trip. You have a mug shot of the principal.
- _____ b. A band formed by two junior high students in the area recorded a song by one of the group's members that has made it to the top of the iTunes list of popular songs. You have several good action shots of the band rehearsing in garage.
- _____ c. Town officials say the local landfill will be full in less than 10 years and when that happens, the town will have to lease space from a neighboring jurisdiction's landfill. You have file photos of the landfill.
- _____ d. Population growth in the area continues to exceed the national average, as it has for the past 10 years, with a growth rate of 4 percent per year. No art is readily available.
- _____ e. The president issued a statement that teen drug use continues to rise. It rose 5 percent last year nationally. In your community, a group of parents have released an informal, unscientific survey showing that drug use in the community is well below the national average, but that abuse of prescription medications continues to climb. Survey results are available and can be made into graphics.
- _____ f. During spring break, a local church group will be taking 100 students to the area ravaged by Hurricane Katrina to help clean up the area that is still uninhabitable. A group shot of last springs' service trip participants is available.
- _____ g. Gas prices continue to climb.
- _____ h. Local hospitals announced they have openings for more than 50 nurses. They have filled the current needs with so-called "traveling nurses" that get paid significantly more than staff nurses and may come from hundreds of miles away. The local community college still refuses to start a nursing program. A photographer has been assigned to shoot local nurses working.
- _____ i. The junior high volleyball teams remain undefeated about one-fourth of the way into their season. Quality action artwork is available.
- _____ j. Officials at three of the local private schools have announced they will no longer allow students to have cell phones or iPods on during the school day. "We just had too many instances of the students using the technology to their advantage academically," Principal Carie Windham said. You have lots of art of students on their cell phones and using iPods, but none from these specific schools.