



Do you need to redesign? If you're asking the question, the answer is probably yes. Look at your newspaper. Look at the competition's. Does your paper look like everybody else's? (It should not.)

Hit the books. Besides looking at the design, typography, color palette and graphic style of each page of your current newspaper format, look at your old newspaper. Check the archives and the early 20th century city directories in your newsroom and in public libraries. Are there typographic devices from 50 or 100 years ago (before "cold type," before QuarkXpress) that are journalistic and worth reconsidering? A nameplate logotype, perhaps, that defines your newspaper and your community's history?



Don't decorate. Design is organization, not decoration. Don't add elements to your current format. Simplify.

Live with your redesign concept for a while. Look at your mock-up pages and your prototype editions. Look again. If you don't get tired of your new look, if it doesn't lose its appeal after a few weeks, chances are your readers won't tire of it either.

Spell it out. To everybody. Develop a typographic and color style manual. Give everybody in the building a copy. During the prototype process, keep notes and marked tearsheets when you identify a style that works. Compile a handout specifying every informational and directional label, every gutter, every rule, every color choice, every element.



Focus the group. If your redesign plans include asking reader focus groups for opinions, make sure one person in each group knows something about design. Better yet, ask a lot of artsy readers to attend the same session.

Sustain it. Make sure somebody on the staff has the ability and the authority to enforce the rules. A successful redesign and its style manual leave no questions about how big to make a headline or how wide to make a cutline. Somebody needs to make sure creativity follows style.

-J. Ford Huffman



He said, she said

Should redesign be done in-house or outside, and how far should it go? Trust your instincts.

By Alan Allnutt and Lucie Lacava

We thought we'd have a debate over the two questions put before us: Should redesign be complete or gradual, and should it be done in-house or by an outside designer?

But we couldn't find very much to disagree on, making the debate rather tame. In the end we came to a resounding "It depends." Here is some of our conversation.

On hiring an outside designer or using in-house resources:

Lucie Lacava: Obviously, it depends on who you have on staff and at what level you are redesigning.

Alan Allnutt: Right. I think it is important to have an outside point of view in a major redesign. In 1989, when we redesigned The Gazette and you were still a relatively young designer, we brought in Mario Garcia for a consultation, but he mainly reinforced what you had already begun and gave us some help with the underlying grid. I suppose you perform that function now, sometimes.

LL: Sometimes. It is definitely better when the internal graphics person is working closely with the consultant. I have worked in situations where I really only dealt with the editors, and I worry about the design's integrity after the redesign if the staff designer is not bought in.

A.A.: There is no question that the fastest way to have your redesign subverted is to impose something from the outside on your design and editing staff. You may get vicious obedience followed by constant complaints that the design "just doesn't work." Then again, constant tinkering with a new design may mean it wasn't sound in the first place. I wouldn't counsel accepting something that offends you or that you think looks ridiculous - that is where the instincts come in.

MONTREAL We'll have snow for Dec. 25, weather office says. A3 | CHRISTMAS FUND Edmé's alone - and pregnant. A4

MONTREAL The Gazette SINCE 1778

SPORTS FINAL MONDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1997 \$74 OUTSIDE METRO AREA 79¢

MONTREAL LINKS
Cops find van tied to bomb suspect

Investigative reporters had an RCMP search warrant late last week searched a van and a building in Montreal tied to the van of the victim of a bombing plot that has put the United States on high alert over a possible terrorist attack.

An RCMP search warrant that included a probe into a building on Avenue St. Louis in Montreal was issued by a judge on Tuesday night in a building that was searched for a van tied to a bombing plot, a source close to the RCMP said.

About 500 reporters were called to leave their news desks late last night for a press conference, which was held at the RCMP headquarters in Montreal.

The RCMP said the van was used to transport a suspect in the bombing plot, which was linked to a suspect in the bombing plot, which was linked to a suspect in the bombing plot.

Exodus in Venezuela



Venezuelan Maritimo carried an injured woman yesterday onto a ferry for the island of Margarita in the Gulf of Venezuela.

Floods kill 5,000

LA GUAYRA, Venezuela - A massive flood hit the island of Margarita in the Gulf of Venezuela yesterday, killing at least 5,000 people, according to a report from the United Nations.

The flood was caused by heavy rains that fell over the island for several days, causing the water level to rise to an unprecedented level.

The United Nations said that the flood was the worst natural disaster in Venezuela since 1969.

Unions iron out last snag

All public-sector groups support new agreement

Quebec's public sector unions finally all decided to support an agreement to participate in the province's new labor relations.

The Confederation of National Trade Unions had held out for a long time, but it has now agreed to the terms of the new agreement.

The agreement provides for a 3.5 per cent wage increase over the next two years, and a 1.5 per cent increase in the next two years.

The agreement also provides for a 1.5 per cent increase in the next two years.

INSIDE

WORLD
Russia takes to Unity

The Daily News, a new daily newspaper, is set to launch in Moscow.

MONDAY SPORTS
Surin feels golden

Surin's victory in the 100m dash at the World Championships in Athens.

LIVING
Point of no return

A new report says that the world is approaching a point of no return in terms of climate change.

WEATHER
Forecasting rain

The weather forecast for the next few days shows a chance of rain.

INDEX

TSX 30000.00	US 10000.00	EURO 100.00	YEN 100.00
Oil 20.00	Gold 350.00	Platinum 1000.00	Palladium 1000.00
Wheat 10.00	Soybeans 10.00	Corn 10.00	Rice 10.00
Iron Ore 100.00	Nickel 10.00	Copper 10.00	Zinc 10.00
Lead 10.00	Aluminum 10.00	Steel 10.00	Coal 10.00

One-stop health care

PLATTSBURGH, N.Y. - A new health care center in Plattsburgh, N.Y., is set to open next month. The center will provide a wide range of services, including primary care, specialty care, and diagnostic services.

The center is located in a new building that was built by the local government.

The center will be a one-stop health care center, providing all the services that patients need in one place.

canada.com

First Class 1997 Range Rover

Executive Business 1997 Range Rover

1997 Range Rover Low Mile 1997

1997 Range Rover Low Mile 1997

1997 Range Rover Low Mile 1997

1997 Range Rover Low Mile 1997

The Gazette's current look did away with the earlier earlug advertising and returned to a more traditional nameplate.

MONTREAL

The Gazette

SINCE 1778

The Gazette

MONTREAL SINCE 1778

The Gazette's 222-year history is better reflected in the present nameplate, bottom, than in an earlier "modernized" version.



reezed onto a 1-inch-narrower page, 192 design still was in use in 1997.



first Lacava-Allnutt redesign is reflected in this 1992 edition, when the paper was printed on a 54-inch-wide sheet.

L.L.: I agree. Trust your instincts, but when it comes to issues of real design expertise such as typography or grid structure, trust your designer. I think this is very hard for many editors who confuse their own personal taste with what is best for readers within the goals they have set.

We agreed that a major redesign should be attempted by inside staff alone at the bigger papers only where the design team has the experience and time to do it right. Designers should have both talent and fairly serious formal training in design and typography (a degree in fine or graphic arts), in addition to plenty of newspaper experience. The editor and staff designer should be able to work together on "tune-ups" or modest changes to headline fonts or section flags, but editors shouldn't underestimate the time required for so-called minor repairs.

So how do you decide if you want to do a big-bang redesign or a program of "continuous improvement"?

L.L.: I really think complete redesigns should be saved for major technological change (new presses with new page sizes, for example) or for papers that are suffering serious circulation problems. Successful newspapers usually make gradual changes and retain their character.

A.A.: Certainly, The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal have changed over time, but readers of the Times would be hard-pressed to identify the many changes — other than color photos — that have been made over the past 15 years. But most of the rest of us, who have to appeal to a much broader readership in rapidly changing markets, have been casting around for something new. That leads to major make-overs.

L.L.: Many papers are also still getting over the '80s, when they tended to be quite trendy. What was

thought to be hip is now dated because people tended toward the decorative rather than the meaningful. Many publishers and editors now feel they must be more functional and content-driven. I think in some cases, newspapers alienated their real readers and now find a need to redesign again. I also think the cycle of change has shortened.

A.A.: Right. As publishers and editors move around there seems to be a temptation to put their stamp on a paper. There may be a change in philosophy from one publisher to another, which in turn has the editor rethinking the paper. I worry that readers might find all this change disconcerting. Older readers certainly react badly when we mess with a body type they have come to accept, for example. Of course that is a fundamental conundrum we face: keep appealing to the best (and older) readers while trying to draw in the young.

Editors — and sometimes publishers — need to have a clear idea of what they want the newspaper to be, what they want to convey to readers at a glance with the design. If anyone finds a sure-fire way to be all things to all people, please let us know!



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Lucie Lacava is a publication designer based in Montreal. She was a staff designer and art director of **The Gazette** until 1992. She can be reached at lacava@total.net



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