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8 Ways to Treat Freelancers Well

Chloe Veltman · Thursday, July 7th, 2011

What fealty does a freelance (arts) journalist owe to her media clients? What does an editor working from within a media organization owe a trusted freelancer?

The media industry is changing fast and these relationships desperately need to be re-thought.

It used to be that a freelancer was a hired gun with no real need for loyalty to a media organization beyond fulfilling the professional obligations set out in each individual assignment. This standard cut both ways. Staffers were expected to pick up all the slack in terms of doing “extra” tasks like representing the media organization on panels and at conferences, blogging etc.

But now that media entities are relying increasingly on freelancers for content and more, the dynamic seems to be shifting.

It seems to me that media organizations are expecting the same level of buy-in and loyalty from freelancers as they do from staffers. But they are not in the main providing the freelancer with any reasons to be loyal.

There have been occasions in the past when I have felt OK about behaving like a staffer, even though I’ve not been receiving the same benefits or steady paycheck as an employee. If I’m getting regular work from a media organization, am being well remunerated for each assignment and there is mutual respect on both sides, then sometimes I don’t mind going the extra mile for an editor. For example, I’ll run off a quick list every week of “Critic’s Picks” events listings for the organization’s website, post to facebook and tweet about articles, attend staff meetings at the editor’s office and act as a sounding board for his or her ideas.

But I’m much less willing to do more than the bare minimum (ie the basic assignment in return for a set fee) if I feel like I’m being treated with little respect and am not being compensated adequately for my hard work and expertise.

Here are some ways in which those in charge of working with freelancers can maintain positive relationships and thereby help to keep their organizations, which depend so strongly on outside help these days, ticking along:

Read the 8 ways here…

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