Strategic Planning Task Force

EIJ: Boards and Leaders Update and Town Hall

Read more on SPJ website: bit.ly/spjstrategy
Overview

- Develop and deliver a new strategic plan for SPJ
- Examination, communication and recommendations through EIJ19 and beyond
- Begin broad with intent to narrow focus on board-defined most critical areas
  - Survey
  - Town hall discussions/presentations at EIJ
  - Possible focus groups
  - Updates online at bit.ly/spjstrategy
Overview

- Provide update to SPJ board, SPJ Foundation board and membership at EIJ19
  - Gather feedback and add to report
  - Matt Hall and new executive director to be added to the committee after EIJ19
- Provide clear strategy recommendations in forthcoming comprehensive report
  - Fall 2019/winter 2020
  - Present to SPJ Board at April 2020 meeting
The committee

- Victor Hernandez (chair)
- Patti Newberry
- Alex Tarquinio
- Yvette Walker
- Mike Reilley
- Jennifer Royer
- Kimberly Chin
- April Bethea (SPJ Foundation rep)
Background

● SPJ last created a strategic plan in 2007.
  - Ran seven pages, with multiple goals for each priority — and was rarely, if ever, consulted after completion
  - Former Executive Director Joe Skeel long supported creating a plan.
  - Former SPJ President Dave Cuillier shared his ideas for a plan more recently.
1) What do we desire or expect SPJ to be known for representing across the long-term?

2) What is SPJ’s competitive advantage from the rest of the 65+ journalism orgs?

3) What is SPJ’s competitive disadvantage from the rest of the 65+ journalism orgs?

4) What do members value most from their association with SPJ?

5) What are the most impactful areas/program we should be focused on?

6) What are the least impactful areas/programs that we should back away from?

7) Who are our members going forward and how might that evolve?

8) How will we balance what we think SPJ members need versus what they believe is the case?

9) How can we effectively accelerate SPJ’s evolution without alienating certain member groups?

10) What could SPJ do to radically integrate Digital culture and programs?

11) How can we shift journalism trainings to holistic hands-on workshop approaches?
Where else are members turning?

What do they do well that we also offer?

What do they do well that we don’t, and should consider?
The Strategic Planning Task Force is creating a living, breathing document to guide the board, and will run no more than three pages.

- At EIJ2020, delegates will be asked to adjust bylaws to require boards to review and revise the plan every April

Currently in research, feedback and exploration phase: Survey completed, town hall discussions and board updates at EIJ
Survey background

• Sent to 5,591 members through direct emails: 34 questions: quantitative, qualitative, demographic
  ○ Reminders in Leads and promoted heavily on social media channels

• 550 responses | 9.9% response rate
  ○ Survey Gizmo: External surveys will generally receive a 10%-15% average response rate

• Two-thirds of respondents were age 50 or older
  ○ Responses by age groups were consistent on questions such as moving HQ, name change, lobbyist, etc.

• 50% female, 49% male, 1% did not designate

• 10.5% of responses were from California
  ○ Followed by New York (6.4%), Ohio (6%), Illinois (5%) and Florida (4.8%)
Survey findings

What is your age?
Answered: 545   Skipped: 5

- Under 18
- 18-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- 61-70
- 71-80
- 80-plus
What is your specific SPJ involvement?

Answered: 545   Skipped: 5
Survey findings

In what field did you/do you work?

Answered: 397  Skipped: 153

- Online: 30%
- TV: 15%
- Radio: 10%
- Newspaper: 50%
- Magazine: 20%
- Other (please specify): 10%
What other professional journalism organizations do you belong to?

Answered: 314  Skipped: 236
Survey findings

How likely are you to renew your membership in the upcoming year? Why or why not?

Answered: 546  Skipped: 4

- Very likely: 60%
- Likely: 20%
- Somewhat likely: 5%
- Neither likely nor unlikely: 5%
- Somewhat unlikely: 2%
- Unlikely: 1%
- Very unlikely: 0%
**Survey findings overview**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents told us:</th>
<th>Respondents told us:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• They do not support moving HQ to NYC or Washington DC</td>
<td>Three areas for SPJ to focus on in the next decade (in order):</td>
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<tr>
<td>• They do not support changing SPJ’s name to the Society for Professional Journalism</td>
<td>1) Ethics</td>
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<td>• They do support increasing SPJ’s lobbying efforts at the local and national levels.</td>
<td>2) Journalism training</td>
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<td>• They do support hiring a full-time lobbyist</td>
<td>3) Open government</td>
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<td>• They strongly oppose increasing member dues</td>
<td>Most impactful programs SPJ should focus on:</td>
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<td>• They responded inconsistently to questions about education/digital training</td>
<td>1) Advocacy for journalism</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2) Code of Ethics</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3) Industry relevance *</td>
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<td></td>
<td>*Closely followed by: Media literacy and digital training</td>
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</table>
As a member of SPJ, what do you value the most from the organization?

Answered: 549  Skipped: 1

- Access to First...
- Industry association,...
- Network and career...
- Journalism training
- Award opportunities
- Other (please specify)
What would you expect SPJ to be known for over the next decade?

Answered: 402  Skipped: 148

- Career Resources
- Diversity
- Ethics
- Journalism Training
- Open Government
- Other (please specify)
Survey findings

Please rank the most impactful areas/programs SPJ should be focused on?

Answered: 543  Skipped: 7

- Advocacy for journalism,...
- Code of Ethics
- Contests
- Digital Training
- Industry relevance/co...
- Media Literacy
- Student Programs
- Other
Q13
To be more effective, SPJ should move its headquarters from Indianapolis to a more industry-accessible locale such as Washington, D.C., or New York.

10 = strongly agree
0 = strongly disagree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>AVERAGE NUMBER</th>
<th>TOTAL NUMBER</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2,389</td>
<td>513</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Total Respondents: 513
To be more effective, SPJ should increase its lobbying efforts at the national level.

Answered: 522   Skipped: 28
To be more effective, SPJ should increase its lobbying efforts at the local/state level.

Answered: 523   Skipped: 27
Should SPJ change its name to the Society for Professional Journalism?

Answered: 541  Skipped: 9

Yes

No

Other (please specify)

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
Survey findings

- **What respondents told us about SPJ, education and digital training:**
  - There is a need for digital tools training and online trainings (webinars, etc.)
  - SPJ is not meeting their needs in this area
  - In-person trainings are important but not as important as online trainings to them
  - 28% of survey respondents skipped this question
  - On another question, respondents ranked journalism training No. 2 on what the organization should be known for in next decade
    - But ranked it fourth on what they value most in the organization
Survey findings

Where is SPJ lacking in the area of education?

Answered: 394  Skipped: 156

- Webinars
- Online resources
- EIJ programming
- In-person training
- I am satisfied with the...
- Other (please specify)
Members expressed their opinions by answering several open-ended questions. While many see SPJ doing good things, many others have concerns.

One comment summed up what many respondents said:

• “Not welcoming, impersonal, low profile. No public position on important issues.”
Survey comments

• **Common themes gleaned from the open-ended questions:**

  • Members who responded want more and better open communication with the board and HQ
  
  • They say the board infighting takes SPJ away from its mission
  
  • They want more chapter support and more interaction with the chapters
  
  • They want more local programming and “turnkey” programming for chapters
Common themes gleaned from the open-ended questions:

- Members who responded want training that goes beyond Facebook and Google (reporting, storytelling, back to the basics) and Webinars
- They want training that prepares members for their next jobs
- They want more employment assistance
- They want more lobbying and advocacy for journalism
- They question our efforts on diversity
Feedback from respondents on a need for better communication:

- “Its bureaucracy and poor communication among members. Also that a lot of people can't express in 30 seconds what the Society provides members or potential members. We need to promote ourselves and SPJ better.”

- “Communication that stimulates action and involvement.”

- “More information on national governance issues. I don't have time to wander through blogs, etc. Just send me the information.”
Survey comments

• Feedback from respondents on a need for better communication:
  • “Trustworthiness”
  • “Streamlined communication”
  • “SPJ should not rely on SPJ Leads and social media for communicating to its members.”
More on communication:

“Just need more connection.”

“Confidence that while we might not always agree with decisions made by HQ and the SPJ board, that the voice of the chapters are being heard.”

“More information in Spanish.”

“I don’t get reached out to unless I say something first.”
More on communication:

- “Transparency from HQ and the national board.”
- “More communication”
- “Responsiveness to local chapters and grassroots members”
- “Why are journalists terrible at communications? Our chapter should be getting messaging guidance, social toolkits, graphics templates, and more.”
Feedback from respondents on in-fighting:

“I am strongly considering not renewing my membership with SPJ. The piece Columbia Journalism Review ran on the organization was embarrassing. The chaos created by … board members makes me question whether SPJ is relevant in 2019.”

“The infighting about our mission has been troubling. … We need to have a strong voice on what we can agree on, and be a resource in the country and world.”

“Recently, it seems infighting within organization has taken attention away from bigger goals and needs to grow the organization and ensure it is relevant to as many journalists as possible.”

“The infighting, back-stabbing and secrecy at the national level. I'm ashamed and irritated to see it in a "professional" organization. I feel those involved have too much time on their hands, if they have the time to waste with politicking. I certainly don’t have the time to waste following it.”
Survey comments

- **Feedback from respondents on chapter support:**
  - “I think the chapter system is broken. We have more chapters that are dormant or poorly led than good ones.”
  - “I don't hear about its efforts/ability to help chapters.”
  - “The national board needs to give state chapters a share of membership dues to incentivize states to boost membership in national; to do otherwise is a death sentence.”
• **Other insightful feedback:**

  • “It [SPJ National] seems detached from local chapters.”

  • “National has become far too political and doesn't seem to understand chapters and their needs. Micromanagement of chapter finances is a crazy requirement that takes too much time for volunteer board members in an organization struggling nationally and locally to attract and retain members.”

  • “There doesn't seem to be much connection between the national organization and the local chapter nearest me. I did go to a local chapter's event a few months ago, and that was fun, but I only found out about it through Facebook. Wouldn't you share mailing lists? I don't get it.”
Feedback from respondents on local programming and training:

“I think there's space for SPJ to step forward and create a program for members to qualify as legit journalists. With the cost of membership and a quiz/competency test of sorts, that could go a long way to be a Seal of Approval. Tricksters likely won't bother to become credentialed. I see this as a sister program to the Trust Project.”

“More local programming and help from national to local chapters to do it.”

“Local programming and leadership. Regular networking events on a local level.”
Feedback from respondents on local programming and training:

- “Access to more smaller-scale programs throughout the year (not just the regional and national conferences).”
- “Training and resources for rural journalists.”
- “Turnkey programs for chapters to offer.”
- “More accessible training.”
Survey *comments*

- **Feedback from respondents on local programming and training, cont.:**
  
  “Personally, I think small chapters, of which I am a member of, should meld together as sub-regions and work together on programs, contests, marketing of the organization and education opportunities with geographics in mind. Two strong programs can be presented to three chapters at different times. Contests can also have more competitions if more chapters banded together to run it.”

  “More advanced digital training offers year-round beyond the partnerships with Facebook and Google. Those offer good info but it's just part of digital.”
Feedback from respondents on what they like most about SPJ:

- “I appreciate its long-lasting voice -- SPJ can be a leader in the community and in promoting media literacy. I appreciate the FOI and other legal support for journalists. I appreciate the recognition -- it can be such a boost to journalists working in small newsrooms to have their work recognized. I appreciate the professional development opportunities.”

- “A strong voice of likeminded colleagues who value journalism ethics and First Amendment and open government advocacy.”

- “Fighting for First Amendment rights.”

- “Awards, Quill, email updates.”

- “It’s a community dedicated to fighting for the tenets of Journalism.”

- “That is simply exists in today’s difficult media environment.”
• Feedback from respondents on employment assistance:

• “Career advancement options or something related to developing and advancing careers. Something like a job board ...”

• “Group health insurance for our association.”

• “Help for transitioning out of journalism.”

• “Support. As a freelancer, I need it! But EVERY time over the last two years that I have reached out to my local chapter president or to an SPJ committee, my requests have been completely ignored, dismissed, or responded to MONTHS later ...”
Survey comments

• Feedback from respondents on employment assistance:

  • “Support. As a freelancer, I need it! But EVERY time over the last two years that I have reached out to my local chapter president or to an SPJ committee, my requests have been completely ignored, dismissed, or responded to MONTHS later ...”

  • “I would like employment assistance and workshops/training devoted to not only diversity and inclusion, but networking with professionals to find jobs in journalism and building career contacts I am not receiving.”

  • “If there were a way to post a profile, job wants, other needs, and it could do a search for you and provide opportunities or contacts. A sense that an organization that I've put a lot of effort into is putting effort into giving something back to me, too.”
• **Feedback from respondents on diversity concerns:**

  • “Seems closed in place 40 years of affirmative action and diversity and SPJ hasn't done enough to support it become involved in minority journalism associations or with the news media's lack of equal opportunity to minority journalists.”

  • “What has the organization done to promote diversity and inclusiveness? How has the organization attracted the next generation of journalists?”

  • “NO DIVERSITY. NO INCLUSION. NO ATTEMPT TO GAIN MORE DIVERSITY.”

  • “More diversity-centered programming and advocacy.”
Survey comments

• Feedback from respondents on lobbying:
  • “A strong voice at the national level defending us against politically motivated attacks that ultimately weaken democracy. This could take the form of lobbying, of fundraisers for Washington politicians, of a quick-response media team to respond to outrageous attacks on us.”
  • “‘Lobbying,’ in a sense, with universities. According to my research and others’, there is still a major gap between what communication executives and academics perceive to be the educational needs of future journalists. I would love to work with SPJ in bridging that gap.”
  • “Updates on lobbying efforts.”
  • “More aggressive lobbying for free press.”
  • “More lobbying efforts on the state level.”
Survey comments

- Not a running theme, but insightful feedback:

  - Lack of relevancy outside of newspaper journalism
  - In search of a mission
  - Low public profile
  - No “cool factor”
  - Fall behind organizations who have specialized
  - Too much for too many
  - Unclear direct benefits
  - No freelance support
  - Members mention they have not received their SPJ cards
And one indicator of a lack of connection between SPJ and our members:

“I'm not sure what the role is supposed to be, how I'm supposed to connect, and I'm not aware of whatever free speech/journalism/4th estate advocacy is going on.”

-- from a female professional radio journalist, 41-50 years of age.
Next **steps**

1. Continued exploration; research, listening (focus groups), analysis [Fall]

2. Full recommendations report available to SPJ Board [Spring]

3. Research findings, survey data, more available [SPJ.org/strategy] [ongoing]

**THANK YOU**