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From the December 2006 Issue

Cover Story : 20 Under 40

TWENTY Under FORTY

Inspiring Hope for the Future

For a time earlier in my career, I was director of recruiting and hiring for the newsroom of a large metro. As such, I had a bird's-eye view of the tremendous impact that talented and energetic hires can have at a paper when matched well to the job and given the support to thrive.



by **JEANNE FOX-ALSTON**

As we know, newspapers are in the midst of a transformation. Executives, directors and managers in all departments are thinking hard about strategies for increasing reach and profitability. But it's also important, I believe, to remember that a high-performance workforce is critical to the success of any business.

In recognition of that, my department (diversity) added talent management to our portfolio earlier this year. Accordingly, the NAA Talent Management and Diversity Department now offers tools and resources to help members attract and retain the talent they need to create an environment that will stimulate innovation.

So, I was pleased to assist with the judging for PRESSTIME's 20 Under 40 awards. It goes without saying that the honorees are an accomplished group and have continually taken on new challenges and responsibilities.

As I looked over the list, considering what conclusions could be drawn about the state of the industry today, several things jumped out. For one, this year's group includes more people of color than in recent years, demonstrating the strategic value of a diverse workforce to many companies.

It also struck me that many of the 20 Under 40s are smack dab in the middle of innovative efforts to grow audience and revenue at their papers or companies. Nearly half work largely on product development and/or multimedia platforms, and one publisher led her small-market paper in its conversion from a paid weekly to a twice weekly to a free daily over a few years.



Not long ago, I heard a panel of industry executives offer advice to up-and-coming young managers on managing their careers. Toward the end, one was asked, "What does the future hold?" Gesturing at the other executives, he said that if they weren't successful in figuring out a winning strategy for long-term success, he was confident that the young managers would be.

The same could be said for this year's 20 Under 40s. They are all truly change agents within their companies and in the industry, providing much-needed leadership and vision.

As a group, they inspire hope for the future of the newspaper industry.

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