

MIAMI HERALD'S COMMUNITY NEWS NETWORK KEY CONTENT GUIDELINES

The partner agreement says we all will “provide high-quality, relevant, original Community News,” and we believe that is the key to attracting readers who will return to your site.

The best way to keep your audience coming back is by changing and updating photos, headlines and stories.

We start this project knowing that at a time when the media is migrating to many new forms and fashions, standards and credibility help set us apart.

...Partners will “use reasonable care to ensure the Community News contains facts and statements that are true, do not defame individuals or infringe upon any copyright, right of privacy, proprietary right or any other right of someone else, and do not present a conflict of interest.”

Here are some key practices to keep in mind:

- Links to other sources can add context, supporting documentation and offer new viewpoints. Linking decisions should be based on serving the audience with as accurate and as complete a picture of the world as possible.
- Many on the web capture and reproduce content without permission. We do not – it’s okay to link to a story on another site (that sends an interested reader to the source), but its not okay to clip and post it in its entirety. The same goes for photos. Don’t copy without specific permission, and always identify the source.
- Journalists should avoid actions that compromise the public’s perception of our fairness and objectivity.
- Conflicts or potential conflicts should be divulged. Discussing and divulging potential concerns is the best defense against conflicts and appearances of conflicts.
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- Stories should not be created and posted in exchange for advertising sales.
- When we need to correct material already published to the web, the correction should be written into the ongoing story in such a way that clarifies the facts and acknowledges any error or misimpression within the new post.
- Our journalists must avoid seeking special treatment because of their job. We should not use our positions in any way to profit, benefit or take other advantage of in any personal business dealings or invest in companies about which we regularly make news decisions.

MIAMI HERALD
Community News Network

EXPECTATIONS FROM PARTNERS

Based on conversations we had as our partnerships developed and from the experience we've had since launch, we thought we ought to spell out some general expectations for site updates, both from the standpoint of frequency and quantity.

Some issues are specifically mentioned in our written agreements and others address some issues that have arisen since we started.

We've learned that fresh photos and stories drive channel traffic. They also enable The Herald to more frequently point to your sites from the miamiherald.com home page, which is a big driver for your site.

- Channels should reflect updating every weekday at minimum. Updates include a fresh photo, a change in the lede photo, a fresh story from the partner or the including of a fresh story from The Herald/AP.
- Short stories play well on the web. A short item about something upcoming – three or four graphs on a community meeting or event – is often all you need.
- Advances need to come down when the event happens. Nothing makes your channel look more dated than a headline that says “X happens Monday” when it's Tuesday or Wednesday. Taking that item down is crucial – and replacing it with another short story on what happened is even better!
- Different content types must be labeled clearly if they are opinion pieces from the local mayor, or chamber of commerce. There isn't anything wrong with that kind of content, but it needs to be clear that it isn't a news story.
- Advertising calls to action should not be included in news stories. Some stories will be profiles of businesses.

Just to refresh memories, in our agreements, partners say they will:

- Provide high-quality, relevant, original Community News to Partner Site's “Mainstage” on a mutually agreed-to daily/weekly schedule.
- Use reasonable care to ensure the Community News contains facts and statements that are true, do not defame individuals or infringe on any copyright, right of privacy or any other right of someone else, and do not present a conflict of interest.