

Editorial Audience

Editorials cannot be written in a vacuum. There must be a probing issue of public significance and such an issue must be treated for a target audience. Editorial writing is an art, therefore it requires some good writing skills. Hence the qualities of a good editorial writer will be discussed so as to prepare you for the task ahead. Editorial writing is a challenging task that involves team work. It is not a one-man show but a product of collective deliberations which are arrived at through the consensus of editorial board members. An editorial is regarded as the backbone of every serious-minded newspaper and therefore editorial writers are expected to have certain skills and qualities that would enable them effectively discharge their fundamental responsibilities. As a corporate voice or expression of newspaper establishment, editorials are not supposed to be written by just anybody but by experienced and tested professionals who are well groomed in the art and science of writing.

Writing an editorial

- Writing an action packed editorial is a herculean task. It is an exercise that calls for diligence, originality and craftsmanship on the side of the writer.
- Sourcing for relevant materials for editorial writing alone is not enough guarantee for construction of a good editorial superstructure. The editorial writer must be sound and logical in presentation and analysis of his/her data.
- The arguments in an editorial must be valid and the write-up must be authoritative. The editorialist must take into cognizance the philosophy and editorial policy of his newspaper while taking a position on any issue of the day.
- Editorial topics should be topical and must carry weight in terms of socio-political and economic value.

- In writing an editorial, the writer should be disciplined in choice of words. He/she must be focused and maintain a bearing in terms of ideas. This gesture will prevent the editorial writer from veering into overgrown forest of ideas.
- Irrespective of the target audience, the language of the editorial writer must be patronizing, lucid, simple but mature in style and substance. There should be no room for verbosity and circumlocution as these would impede the fidelity of the editorial message.

Editorial audience

An editorial writer has three major categories or audience to contend with. A clear understanding of these audience will enable the editorial writer to tailor his message to appropriate readers with high level of fidelity and impact, this gesture would discourage the issue of reaching out to people who are not qualify to feed on editorial diet.

In other words, by knowing his audience, the editorialist would be saved from the costly mistake of empty reach. That would make the task of editorial writing a more rewarding exercise.

Three types of editorial audiences

These are:

- i. The very skeptical audience
- ii. The very selective audience
- iii. The obscure or obstinate audience.

The very skeptical audience: These are sophisticated audience with high aura of excellence. They question facts, figures, grammar, tone, style and content of every editorial until they are satisfied. They are the learned and curious beings who are conscious of their fundamental human rights. They believe in the power of public opinion. The editorial writer should therefore recognize this group of audience and tailor his/her message to meet their standard and idiosyncrasies.

The very selective audience: These are specialized audience who care only about what goes on in their chosen fields. They are addicted to the knowledge in their fields or disciplines and are glued to same without bothering about things outside their areas of interest or professional attachment. For an editorial writer to meet the yearnings and aspirations of this group of people, he/she has to segment his market (editorial) in tandem with the selectivity of this audience. Experts argue that an editorial can hardly be for everybody at the same time. The editorial writer must mentally define his audience before writing his piece.

The obscure or obstinate audience: This group of people is blind critics. Anything that is said outside their frame of reference by someone else is wrong. Their worldview is very limited and does not go beyond their local assemblies where they often feed on rumour mongering and worthless abracadabras (*a word said by conjurors when performing a magic trick*) of the day. These groups of people are more of intellectual lumpen and they believe that holding an opinion is a transgression against public order. They are mere chatter-boxes who read editorials not to learn anything but to attack the writers with blind and worthless criticisms. This group of people is irresponsible and uncoordinated members of Homo sapiens who are fond of analyzing public policies from the shallow and alcoholic perspective.

In writing an editorial, the writer should wholly jettison this group of people. This is because, obstinate audience are no audience and cannot appreciate the robust illumination of public policies and case making stuff which editorials often deal with.

Creative to do section

What is the importance of editorial audience while writing editorial?