

News the judge of
clarity of the



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

News sense is essential for a sub-editor also. He is the first reader of a reporter's copy and if the reporter has made a mistake he has to correct it. A bad copy may have the most important element of the story buried in the fourth paragraph. It will be left to the sub-editor's nose for news to bring that to the first paragraph. 2.

Clarity: A reporter should have clarity of mind and expression. A person who is confused himself cannot tell a story to others. Only clarity of mind is not enough unless it is accompanied by clarity of expression. Without clarity of expression clarity of mind has no meaning. Sub-editor is the judge of clarity of the copy a good subeditor will never allow a copy escape him unless the meaning is crystal clear. He has every right to make life miserable for a reporter who is not clear and does not write in simple language. 3.

Objectivity: Reporter and sub-editor should aim at objectivity while dealing with a story. They should not allow their personal bias or ideas to creep into a story. They should not take sides but try to cover all the different viewpoints to achieve balance in the story. 4. Accuracy: A reporter should strive for accuracy.

He should check and re-check his facts till he is satisfied that he has them accurate. In this respect he should not take any chance as accuracy is directly proportional to the credibility of a reporter and his newspaper. The role of a sub-editor is to check for accuracy. It is particularly important when background is involved. In the case of dates and names the reporter may rely on his memory but the sub-editor must check them from reference material available in the newspaper office. When there is a doubt he should

leave it out—this is the golden rule of journalism. It is better not to say a thing than to say it wrong. 5.

Alertness: A reporter should always be alert while dealing with his subjects. Many major news breaks in the past were possible because of alertness of reporters. Scoops don't walk into newspaper offices—alert reporters catch them in air and pursue. A sub-editor has to be alert while working on news-desk. Lack of alertness of a sub-editor can be seen by readers in the morning for he will be leaving or introducing mistakes for everybody to see. 6. Speed: In today's world speed matters everywhere.

A person who cannot work fast cannot be a good reporter. While maintaining all other desirable qualities a reporter should strive to work faster. He should think fast, decide fast and write or type fast for he has to meet deadlines or may have to go to another assignment. A sub-editor also has to work with speed. He cannot sit with a copy for long.

He has to do swiftly whatever is required of him for a lot more copy is waiting for him. A slow sub-editor is a curse at the news desk and is treated with contempt. Some people are misfits in the profession. 7. Calmness: Reporters and sub-editors often work in trying circumstances. They have to remain calm and composed in most exciting and tragic circumstances.

In many situations they have to be calm— devoid of hysterical actions or utterances and apply appropriate mental and physical effort to write or edit the story. Reporters and sub-editors are human beings. They have emotions but they have to stifle them in the face of disturbing influences—they have to develop resistance to excitability. Being in the field, reporters face many

such occasions when they have to control their emotions. Sub-editors should develop a temperament to work under pressure of deadlines. They should not lose their cool if they are behind the clock for calm mind can work faster.

8. Curiosity: Reporters and sub-editors should have an insatiable curiosity.

For reporters it is useful in developing lust for facts that may lead to better stories. This characteristic will keep on improving a sub-editor for with every passing day a curious subeditor will have a better background to do his job the next day. Reporters and sub-editors should read as much as possible to constantly improve their awareness level. 9.

Scepticism: It is another necessary quality which a reporter and a subeditor should cultivate. They should not take anything for granted. They should have an unwavering posture of doubt until faced with undeniable proof.

Reporters should be more vigilant for many forces constantly try to use them, and through them their paper. Many people try to plant on reporters a wrong story for their own ends. Many a time reporters' fall into such traps in good faith. They should have enough scepticism to avoid such plots.

Sub-editors should also be careful for some clever politicians, public relations men and product advertisers keep on trying to take them for a ride. They should not allow anything to go in news columns that should actually go as advertisement. They should not fail to check even reporters, copy for such foul play. 10.

Punctuality: It is a good habit. For reporters it is a must for if they are not punctual they may miss something for which they may have to depend on secondary sources. It is always better to be punctual and then wait than

reach late and ask others—a rival may misinform you or hide some important information. At the desk too punctuality pays.

If a sub-editor is punctual he will be treated with respect by his co-workers. If he is late he will irritate them and spoil the working atmosphere. Besides he may have to face the problem of backlog of copy which he will have to clear under the pressure of deadline. 11. Patience: It is a quality which helps a reporter in a big way for many a time almost daily he has to test his patience, the voluntary self-control or restraint that helps one to endure waiting, provocation, injustice, suffering or any of the unpleasant vicissitudes of time and life. Most of the time a reporter waits for someone or something and patience gives him the willingness for wait without becoming disgruntled or anxious. Many a time he has to tolerate other people's shortcomings and has to remain unperturbed by someone else's slowness or other quirks.

Patience also helps sub-editors as they work long hours in trying conditions. They have to put up with many annoying situations everyday vis-a-vis reporters, proof readers or typesetters. 12.

Imagination: This basic mental faculty helps reporters in writing better stories that retain the reader's interest. For a sub-editor this creative faculty is very useful as he can add sparkle to somebody else's copy and make it lively. Besides, imaginative headlines attract the reader and improve the quality of a newspaper. 13. Farsightedness: An intelligent envisioning of the future helps newsmen in general. The quality helps them in identifying processes and people who will be important in future.

Reporters can watch such processes and cultivate people who may become important news sources in the future. It helps reporters and sub-editors in determining the importance of an event. A reporter with foresight can think ahead and prepare for eventualities.

With a little forethought sub-editors can plan their work so as to avoid tension and it results in better functioning of the desk. 14. Self-discipline: One can achieve a degree of proficiency in sub-editing or reporting by systematic effort and self-control.

In this sense self-discipline suggests dedication and firm commitment. It helps in journalism as in any other field. 15. Integrity: It is a virtue in itself and implies undeviating honesty and strict adherence to a stern code of ethics. This human quality is important for journalists. It is more important for reporters for they are more exposed to temptation as compared to sub-editors. 16. Fearlessness and Frankness: These qualities help reporters in asking unpleasant questions and taking risks to find out truth.

Nobody gives a story on a platter. The reporter will have to probe, question, authenticate and exercise his power of deduction to get a good story. 17. Tactfulness: A reporter should be tactful. He should have the ability to handle sensitive people and situations gracefully without causing hurt or angry feelings. He should be considerate of others and should be careful not to embarrass, upset or offend them.

A reporter should have flexible and sociable personality and should have a nature that relishes variety of experiences. He should have an understanding

of human behaviour and emotions. This will help him in developing contacts that are so essential for news gathering.

18. Initiative: A reporter who works in the field should have an outgoing nature with initiative and drive. These qualities will help him get acquainted with news sources and get stories from them. A meek, retiring or shy person is not fit for reporting. He may be good at his desk. Reporters need a fair amount of assertiveness and aggressiveness to be successful in their career.

- 19. Mobility: A reporter should be mobile. He should enjoy moving around and should not hesitate travelling distances to get stories when required. He should go to his news sources as often as possible for such constant contacts help him get news. A mobile reporter is seldom caught napping when a major story breaks.

20. Diligence: Reporters and sub-editors should be diligent. Their jobs require painstaking exertion of intense care and effort, alertness and dedication to the task and wary watchfulness. They have to make extremely fine distinctions while writing or editing copy a sub-editor should insist on perfection and should lose his job for he can make or impair the newspaper. These qualities are basically qualities of good and efficient human beings.

Good and efficient human being makes good and efficient sub-editors and reporters. All other things being equal reporters need additional qualities to deal effectively with all sorts of people they meet in the field. Sub-editors should have better command over language as they improve what reporters write.