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## On the ‘Craftsmanship Spirit’ of Special Issue Editors: Postprint

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### Abstract

Today, all sectors of society are calling for and exploring the “spirit of craftsmanship.” Newspaper editors likewise require a rigorous, refined, and focused “spirit of craftsmanship,” necessitating continuous enhancement of self-awareness, the creation of journalistic excellence through meticulous refinement and the pursuit of perfection, and proactive adaptation to the evolving times, thereby ensuring survival and development within the new media landscape.

### Full Text

### Preamble

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### An Analysis of the “Craftsmanship Spirit” in Special Issue Editing

**Abstract:** Today, all industries are calling for and exploring the “craftsmanship spirit.” Newspaper editors also need this rigorous, refined, and dedicated craftsmanship spirit. Only by continuously strengthening their professional consciousness, creating journalistic excellence through meticulous work and pursuit of perfection, and actively responding to the changes of the times can they survive and develop in the new media environment.

**Keywords:** craftsmanship spirit; special issue editors; perseverance; innovation

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“Craftsmanship spirit” is a philosophy of striving for perfection and excellence through meticulous refinement. In Chinese culture, it manifests as: the innova-

tive spirit of “valuing ingenuity,” the work attitude of “pursuing excellence,” and the life ideal of “unity of Dao and skill.” “Craftsmanship spirit” is not only applicable to fields involving “craft” such as industry, manufacturing, and construction. As editors of newspaper special issues, polishing articles is just like traditional artisans crafting handmade products—every topic selection, every manuscript, and every layout must be carefully weighed and repeatedly refined to produce superior work through exquisite craftsmanship. Only in this way can we create more and better journalistic masterpieces. Editors must adopt a reader-responsible approach, maintaining sufficient focus at work and attending to every detail with meticulous care. They also need a work style of striving for perfection, strictly controlling the political, knowledge, and textual aspects of manuscripts, emphasizing quality to create excellent reports. Furthermore, editors must have the courage to innovate in their thinking. Under the impact of new media, readers’ reading habits and preferences are also changing. Editors must keep pace with the times, continuously innovate, and plan topics according to readers’ demands and market needs, but without losing their own perspective and independent judgment, thereby winning readers’ appreciation.

## 1. The Connotation of “Craftsmanship Spirit”

As a concentrated expression of the Chinese national spirit, the “craftsmanship spirit” has gained new vitality and connotations with the development of the times and China’s increasing emphasis on cultural industries. It primarily comprises four aspects: dedication, excellence, focus, and innovation. Dedication refers to a professional state of mind where practitioners develop a serious and responsible, whole-hearted commitment based on their love and reverence for their profession. Excellence, as the term suggests, means “striving for perfection”—it is the professional quality of practitioners who refine every process and product with intense concentration, pursuing the ultimate. Focus means concentrating all one’s energy on a single task with a determined and persistent mind, an essential spiritual trait that “master craftsmen” must possess. Finally, “craftsmanship spirit” also contains the implication of innovation—daring to break through and pursue novelty, managing unique styles from fresh perspectives. As special issue editors, we must uphold the concept of “craftsmanship spirit” while continuously innovating it to improve layout quality.

## 2. “Craftsmanship Spirit” as an Essential Quality for Special Issue Editors

Characterized by “rigorous meticulousness, pursuit of excellence, and courage to innovate,” the “craftsmanship spirit” is likewise an essential quality for special issue editors. Editors need a rigorous and meticulous work attitude. If we compare a newspaper to a machine, then each news work is a component on that machine. If components have problems, the machine’s quality will inevitably decline, even affecting its normal operation. As newspaper special issue editors, the work involves numerous processes such as manuscript collection and process-

ing, topic selection, manuscript review, and layout design, all of which require editors to maintain a reader-responsible approach, sufficient focus at work, and meticulous attention to every detail. Editors also need a work style of striving for perfection, strictly controlling the political, knowledge, and textual aspects of manuscripts, emphasizing quality to create excellent reports. Moreover, editors must have the courage to innovate in their thinking. Under the impact of new media, readers' reading habits and preferences are also changing. Editors must keep pace with the times, continuously innovate, and plan topics according to readers' demands and market needs, but without losing their own perspective and independent judgment, thereby winning readers' appreciation.

### 3. Upholding and Innovating the “Craftsmanship Spirit”

#### 3.1 Upholding the “Craftsmanship Spirit”

“Craftsmanship spirit” originates from artisans' meticulous pursuit of perfection during the completion of their works. It embodies Chinese spirit, culture, and national creativity, exerting important influences on our daily lives and work that deserve advocacy and inheritance in the new era. News media are guardians of social responsibility and inheritors of history and culture, and as gatekeepers of media, the quality of editors' work directly determines the quality of information released by the entire media organization. Therefore, editors must possess the “craftsmanship spirit” of silent dedication, pursuit of perfection, and striving for zero errors. An editor' s vision and competence determine the quality of manuscripts, yet mastering a skill to perfection is no easy task—it requires us to forge ahead with the “craftsmanship spirit.” As layout editors for newspaper special issues, we must remain calm and patient, making topic selections newer and better, editing manuscripts more refined and meticulous, and designing layouts more creatively.

**3.1.1 Racking Brains for Planning** For newspaper special issues, “planning” is actually an old topic, yet it remains the highlight of special issues. Carefully planned special issues demonstrate a newspaper' s vibrant vitality and capture readers' hearts. As one newspaper leader said: “Planning isn' t everything, but without it, you have nothing. As long as conditions permit, we should actively organize planning.” For every special issue plan, editors must stand from the readers' perspective, analyze and understand hot and difficult issues that readers care about, and identify topics that interest and concern them for layout planning. Currently, types of special issue planning include: planning around a single theme, planning according to special days, planning by seizing social hot issues, and interactive planning with other media. Simply put, editors must sing the “four seasons song” well—there are always special days throughout the year worth editors' attention and careful planning, such as Spring Festival, National Day, Children' s Day, Mid-Autumn Festival, Qingming Festival, etc., closely focusing on traditional holidays to promote traditional culture. Additionally, for foreseeable major news events and significant activities,

we can plan and coordinate in advance. Based on news facts, we should formulate overall planning ideas for reporting, identify reporting priorities, entry points, and hot spots, determine reporting angles, methods, and means, then organize in-depth interviews and conduct deep analysis. Every link in planning must be rigorous and meticulous, striving for perfection, to attract widespread reader attention and achieve optimal news communication effects.

**3.1.2 Carefully and Meticulously Editing Manuscripts** As is well known, editing work is mental labor but also meticulous work, requiring a high sense of responsibility and mission, as well as rigorous, serious, and meticulous work habits. In day-to-day work, editors must remember their “craftsmanship mission,” ensuring “one man guards the pass, ten thousand errors cannot get through” with rigorous spirit and a truth-seeking, pragmatic style. From the correct usage of the three structural particles “的, 地, 得” to whether a headline might cause ambiguity, every character, word, sentence, and punctuation mark must be treated with meticulous care and careful deliberation, developing keen insight. Additionally, editors must have high political consciousness, remaining clear-minded with distinct attitudes and firm stances on major issues of principle, consciously maintaining consistency with the Party Central Committee. They should thoroughly grasp the essence of the Party’s line, principles, and policies and consciously apply them in news practice. While working, editors cannot be distracted; they must maintain high concentration, always keeping a string taut in their minds to strictly guard against political errors, factual errors, and technical errors. During the editing process, when encountering important manuscripts related to current affairs and policies, editors should collaborate with proofreaders, carefully editing and reviewing every word, sentence, and punctuation mark, repeatedly checking doubtful points with extreme care and caution, striving to eliminate loopholes and errors before publication.

**3.1.3 Meticulously Crafting Layouts** Nowadays, news competition is increasingly fierce, and content about current affairs and hot topics is becoming more homogeneous. To attract attention and win readers’ focus, creative layout design is an excellent and effective choice. Some newspaper special issue editors, besides editing manuscripts, also design layouts. A good special issue must be the perfect combination of “good layout” and “good manuscripts.” In addition to carefully planning content, editors must continuously learn and improve layout design. Layout design should emphasize simplicity, clarity, and clear hierarchy to facilitate reading and meet readers’ needs for efficient information acquisition. Furthermore, we must pay attention to the impact of images. Images are the eyes of a newspaper—they can break monotony, stimulate readers’ vision, and attract them to read the newspaper. Images can also transform mundane matters into lively and interesting pictures, more easily arousing reading interest than text. Additionally, we can use bright and eye-catching colors to enhance the aesthetic effect of layouts, creating visual impact that makes the entire lay-

out emotional and atmospheric with a distinctive overall effect. Finally, we can appropriately add embellishments such as fonts, lines, and white space—these are silent languages. With them, layout editors not only beautify the layout but also communicate with readers, making the layout more dazzling.

**3.1.4 Innovating the “Craftsmanship Spirit”** The core of “craftsmanship spirit” is innovation. Modern craftsmanship spirit is not simply repetition and perseverance but improvement and innovation. Continuous repetition in specific work is the soil that nurtures innovation, while the pursuit of perfection is the driving force that propels it. Craftsmen enjoy constantly refining their products, continuously improving their techniques, and relishing the process of their products’ continuous sublimation in their hands. The same applies to special issue editors—constantly seeking new topics, continuously changing layouts, challenging themselves time and again, and enjoying the joy of success. To innovate the “craftsmanship spirit” in practical work, we must possess corresponding superb “craftsmanship skills.” Currently, media development is in an important transition period. Editors should overcome impetuous mindsets, calm down, strengthen their professional skills learning and continuing education, and continuously improve their professional competence. They must keep pace with the times, striving to enhance political, cultural, professional, and innovative qualities. Simultaneously, they should be erudite and well-informed, extensively exposed to various types of knowledge to become generalists. They should read more books, study diligently, and research painstakingly in daily life, continuously improving their cultural and knowledge levels, striving to enhance work skills, and becoming “all-rounders.”

**3.1.5 Content Innovation** In the “Internet Plus” era, intellectual property is receiving increasing attention. Although various knockoff products are dazzling, merely imitating without innovating ultimately leads to a dead end. The same applies to newspaper special issues—if manuscript content is outdated and similar, forms are monotonous, and planning lacks originality, they will eventually lose their appeal to readers. Some say special issue editors sing the “four seasons song,” but what to sing and how to sing it reflects the editor’s ingenuity. Taking Spring Festival as an example, many newspapers launch Spring Festival special issues every year with mostly similar content—some share the origin of Spring Festival and how ancient people celebrated it, some invite readers to read Spring Festival in classical poetry together, and others share festival innovations in the new era. The most common practice is publishing readers’ heartfelt festive blessings. Faced with current monotonous, similar, or identical festival special issues, to capture readers’ attention, editors need to exercise their ingenuity to quickly develop distinctive planning schemes, organize authors to write, and carefully design layouts. Good topics are everywhere—as long as one is attentive, observant, and original.

Special issue topics must be innovative, and editors also need news awareness to judge colorful social phenomena with keen eyesight, conducting value judgment

and synthesis. Especially regarding social news focuses, they should propose their own ideas, then organize authors and implement manuscripts, implementing their thoughts to form their own layout characteristics. Editors must have independent thinking, adhere to their own viewpoints and positions, and not follow the crowd. They should strive to find unique perspectives and directions to observe the same news hotspot, displaying content truth to the public with their own style, so that their layout can stand out among numerous publications.

**3.1.6 Technological Innovation** Currently, influenced by new media, newspaper editors need to re-examine their role positioning. They must not only understand and master new media editing technologies but also break away from traditional media editing models to achieve transformation—from single newspaper editors to all-media editors. This poses newer and higher requirements for newspaper editors' overall competence. As special issue editors, besides completing daily manuscript editing, proofreading, and layout work, they must also be able to interview, write, photograph, record, and edit, familiar with converged media editing and presentation technologies such as H5 and WeChat push notifications, and grasp workflows for audio-video production, image processing, mobile terminals, and data visualization.

In the first half of 2019, the “three newspapers and one website” and “two microblogs and one client” under Taiyuan Daily Press Group collectively launched the “Hundred Reporters Media Tour for Ecological Civilization Construction” column. Over 100 editors and reporters went deep to the front lines, conducting one-by-one reports on 100 ecological civilization key projects throughout the city. Through project-by-project coverage and integrated media works, they comprehensively interviewed, panoramically displayed, and fully promoted Taiyuan's ecological civilization construction achievements through all media channels. This collective reporting was a major challenge and breakthrough for special issue editors—previously office-bound special issue editors went to factories, mines, fields, and rural areas, recording interviews not only with pen and paper but also with mobile phone recordings and camera shooting, followed by post-production editing, exercising and growing into all-media reporters. During interviews, editors leveraged the combined effects of different media according to their characteristics. To achieve comprehensive audience coverage, they had to consider not only how to write good text but also how to take good photos and videos, identifying reporting angles and presentation forms, while simultaneously completing multimedia content reporting including text, photography, and video.

**3.1.7 Model Innovation** Since the 1990s, newspaper competition has become increasingly fierce. To expand circulation and drive advertising revenue, newspapers have continuously added pages, with various special issues of numerous names springing up. All aspects related to modern society's spiritual and material life—such as home furnishing, decoration, health, fashion, automobiles, and tourism—have fallen within the vision of special issues, while a batch of well-planned, distinctive special issues emerged. However, these special issues

also had obvious problems and drawbacks. First was severe homogenization. When encountering major news topics, all media would rush in, creating a thousand newspapers with the same face. If one newspaper launched an automobile special issue, another would follow suit, causing all special issues to appear largely similar in readers' eyes, lacking distinctive features. Some special issues gradually evolved into street-side "billboards," filled with soft advertisements, losing their journalistic, professional, and readable qualities, leading to reader loss. With the decline of traditional media and the drop in advertising revenue, many newspapers merged or canceled their special issues.

Nevertheless, viable paths still exist. With the development of emerging online media and the deepening of media convergence, the "South Lake Evening News Growth Weekly" under Jiaxing Daily Press Group has risen prominently. Since the beginning of the 20th century, the newspaper has gradually built a team of 50,000 junior reporters. These junior reporters write and submit manuscripts, participate in activities, and conduct interviews and reports through the platform of South Lake Evening News. This new media communication model characterized by interactive transmission and broad audience participation provides a stage for primary and secondary school students to showcase themselves and grow, establishes a communication platform for students, teachers, and parents, and also expands the newspaper's readership, becoming a new growth point for the newspaper's circulation and advertising.

"Craftsmanship spirit" is not a simple slogan but represents innovation in thinking, pursuit of quality, and perseverance in work. In his book *Craftsmanship Spirit: 12 Work Philosophies for Becoming a First-Class Craftsman*, Fu Shouyong said: "The professional quality of first-class craftsmen is an attitude of being responsible for work, family, and oneself, maintaining clarity, calmness, and stability, resisting temptation, enduring loneliness, and managing minor details." As guardians of social responsibility and inheritors of history and culture, newspaper editors must truly identify with and maintain the "craftsmanship spirit" of silent dedication, pursuit of perfection, and striving for zero errors. Advocating "craftsmanship spirit" is a long-term task that must influence one's own layout and all readers who read it through one's own "craftsman" transformation, thereby driving changes in the entire society's atmosphere. This should be the lifelong professional ideal and pursuit of news practitioners.

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*Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.*

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