Nine Strategies to Shape Your Journalism Career

Sudeep Reddy
sreddy@politico.com
@Reddy

Play a Long Game

- Where do you want to go? A beat, a location, a specific role?
- Map out a career strategy (or strategies)
- Update your map regularly as you grow
Study Career Paths

- Understand the wide range of career trajectories for a role that interests you
- Study themes in bios – positions, paths, pitfalls
- Identify the skills needed
- Update your own career map
Study Yourself

- Self-awareness is everything
- Scrutinize your strengths and weaknesses. Write them down.
- Build a plan to build your muscle. Write it down.
- Seek feedback from colleagues on building skills
- Identify training opportunities for your plan
Show, Don’t Tell

- What do your bosses want? Sharp thinking, deep reporting, clear writing, a flexible style?
- Show your work: in clips, in a portfolio, on social media, on air
- Connect your career map to what you need to show for a role that interests you
Find mentors organically

- Do: Seek guidance from people one or two steps up the career ladder first
- Don’t: Waste anyone’s time
- Engage in journalism organizations. Volunteer your time. Help others and you’ll help yourself.
Resumes and Cover Letters

- Resumes show the big picture and small details
- Cover letters: Tell a story. Don’t rehash your resume. Show, don’t tell.
- Tailor your resume or cover letter to the skill set needed in the role you’re seeking.
Remember: You’re Being Watched

- Your public profile is a window into your brain
- Imagine different audiences for your work
- What are the pitfalls? More importantly, what are the missed opportunities?
Negotiate for Opportunity

- Understand supply and demand
- Negotiate for beat assignments, future roles, etc.
- Skills deliver money faster than pleading
Focus on Your Work First

Deliver great work.
Show your work.
Then network.

“While I appreciate your input, what I really need from you is some output.”
My perspective

- DJNF at Rochester Democrat & Chronicle
- Business Reporter & Washington Correspondent at The Dallas Morning News
- Economics Reporter at WSJ
- U.S. Economics editor at WSJ
- Global Economics editor at WSJ
- U.S. managing editor at POLITICO (400+ in U.S.)

Also: AAJA Texas, SAJA, ASNE Reporter, Georgetown SCS