

NEAR + NOW: MOVE THE NEEDLE

10 Signs Your Newsroom May Need a Change

A quick self-assessment for when the work isn't flowing quite as well as it should



CHECK ALL THAT APPLY

- Someone must re-explain the same process to every new person because it was never written down.
- A decision that significantly affects the newsroom was made, and most people found out after the fact.
- A deadline was missed in the last six months because two people thought the other one was handling it.
- There's a meeting your team has every week that everyone privately agrees is a waste of time.
- A new tool was introduced, used enthusiastically for about three weeks, and is now basically ignored.
- You've had the same conversation about the same culture problem more than twice and nothing changed.
- Feedback — upward, downward, or peer-to-peer — rarely happens unless something goes wrong.
- "That's just how we do it here" is a complete answer to the question, "Why does it work that way?"
- Someone new asked a question about how something works and you realized you didn't actually know.
- Your newsroom has a stated commitment (to diversity, to a way of working, to a value) that most people privately agree isn't reflected in how things actually run.

YOUR SCORE

1–2 checks:

You're in good shape. A few rough edges worth addressing.

3–5 checks:

Normal for most newsrooms. Worth having an honest conversation about which items keep recurring.

6–8 checks:

Significant friction. Some of this is fixable quickly; some requires more intentional effort.

9–10 checks:

Your team is probably running on goodwill and individual heroics. That's not sustainable.

Developed from PMJA member research, including our 2026 gathering survey and our 2023 diversity study, "A Look at Diversity in Public Media Journalism."

The good news: None of this is unique to your newsroom. And unlike a lot of journalism problems, these are actually solvable. Change management is a skill that can be learned, practiced, and improved. You don't have to be in charge to contribute to it — you just have to know where to start.

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