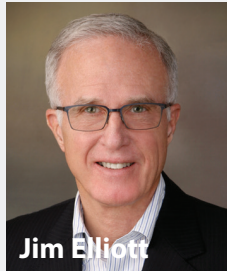


President's Note

It's exhilarating to be back in the swing of things! Remember when people used to grumble about business travel? Now that pandemic restrictions are easing, I'm hearing more and more people rejoice at the opportunity to meet face-to-face once again.



In recent months, I've had the pleasure of speaking at both the SIIA's Business Information & Media Summit (BIMS) in Orlando and the 12th Indian Magazine Congress in New Delhi. Now, I'm packing my bags once again to visit clients in the US, and then jetting off to Lisbon — Cascais for the FIPP World Media Congress in June. I would be thrilled to see you there!

Reconnecting with old acquaintances and forging new connections is what makes these trips so invigorating. It's a joy to be able to get back out there and engage with colleagues and friends in person.

Brand Studio Powerhouses

by Jim Elliott

In late March, I had the honor of delivering the keynote address at the **Indian Media Congress in New Delhi**, where I had the opportunity to learn from the other speakers and gain insights into the challenges faced by Indian publishers. With India's enormous population, diverse demographics, distribution issues, and multiple official languages, the Indian publishing industry faces significant obstacles. Because my experience is rooted in the highly competitive United States, I was pleasantly surprised by the extensive cooperation between Indian publishing houses. One of the most interesting cooperative ventures is the Dastaan Hub, a brand studio created by the Association of Indian Magazines. Dastaan Hub helped me appreciate the tremendous range of definitions people use when they speak about brand studios.

So, what is a brand studio? MediaRadar defines a brand studio as an in-house service offered by publications, big and small, that allows brands to create native-like ads that engage the publication's audience—and a fresh revenue stream for the publisher. Terms like brand studio, brand lab, and content studio often are used interchangeably, but they all center on the idea of using a publisher's knowledge of the audience as a key to developing native content that will resonate with the target audience.

Not so many years ago, the closest thing to brand studio work was the occasional one-off advertorial or special advertising section, which was usually developed by an advertising agency or a publisher. However, there was often significant push-back from the publisher's editorial staff unless the special section was very clearly different from editorial in both look and feel. Of course, the word "advertising" or some variant needed to appear prominently; often, even the typeface had to be different from the editorial. These days, the special content must still be labeled appropriately but the brand studios have much more creative freedom to produce engaging material. Current guidelines from the **American Society of Magazine Editors (ASME)** have even dropped the organization's historic opposition to editors working on advertising or native content, so long as editorial integrity is not compromised by conflicts of interest or lack of transparency.

Several of our clients offer custom content services, but the best example I know of a brand studio created for a highly specialized audience is the **American Chemical Society's C&EN BrandLab**. C&EN is the authoritative B2B news source for scientists in the pharmaceutical, life sciences, industrial chemicals, and instrumentation industries. The C&EN BrandLab creates effective and engaging content tailored to the global scientific audience. Although it is structured much like a traditional creative advertising agency, the BrandLab doesn't limit work to traditional advertising but rather creates marketing solutions through

storytelling designed for C&EN's unique audience.

The T Brand Studio of the *New York Times* is an outstanding consumer example. Using data-derived insights, T Brand Studio develops innovative ad products intended to resonate with specific *New York Times* audience segments. **Bonnier News Brand Studio** takes a different tack, creating native ad offerings for advertisers across many Bonnier products.

Similarly, **BBC StoryWorks** is the content studio of BBC Global News. BBC Storyworks emphasizes their "...century-long pedigree as the world's most trusted storytellers." They offer "thought-provoking, shareable content, published on BBC platforms and designed to engage audiences through beautiful films and innovative digital executions, delivering attention-holding impact."

Reuters Plus provides research and analysis, content strategy and creation, global video production, award-winning design, and targeted distribution. Custom content from this one source is used by broadcasters, publishers, marketers, advertisers, and even governments.

However, the **Dastaan Hub**, a cooperative effort by the Association of Indian Magazines is unique. It is unlike anything we have in the United States. This multi-brand, multi-publisher studio recreates brand stories in relevant cultural context and languages, and delivers content through online, social, and print vehicles to 150+ million Indians. Work created by the Dastaan Hub is supported by 125 magazine publishers in 10 languages, curated to relevant audiences in pre-defined segments. <https://aim.org.in/dastaan-hub/>

The concept of a custom studio structured like an advertising agency creating stories that resonate with specific audiences has been developed in many ways for different purposes in different media platforms in different parts of the world. **There may be no one "right way"** to set up and run a brand studio; we have seen many examples of successful variants. The common goal is to engage the reader more fully than traditional advertising would, without deceiving the reader as to the source of content.

The evolution of brand studio advertising is an excellent example of a broader trend. **Advertising options are becoming more varied and complex, and it follows that advertising salespeople must be knowledgeable about all these options** so they can help their clients benefit from them.

Announcements:



The Elliott Co. is pleased to announce our sales representation of exhibits, sponsorships, and advertising for the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), the leading nonprofit trade association for public relations professionals since 1947. As the sales partner of PRSA, we offer an extensive range of media channels, including newspapers, blogs, sponsored webinars, and eNewsletters, as well as event sponsorships, such as the prestigious Anvil Awards, known as "the Oscars for the PR Industry." Additionally, we proudly represent PRSA's flagship event, ICON, which is the premier conference for the entire strategic communications community. We also support PRSA's Sectional Conferences, which offer focused discussions and networking opportunities for professionals within specific disciplines of the PR industry. We are committed to delivering exceptional results to our clients and look forward to partnering with PRSA to enhance their visibility and reach.



Jim Elliott will be attending the upcoming FIPP World Media Congress in Lisbon—Cascais, Portugal, June 6-8, 2023. Jim will be one of many speakers from around the world who will be discussing the latest industry topics from their unique perspectives. If you're interested in staying ahead of the curve in the world of global media and marketing and building international professional connections, be sure to attend this exciting event!
fippcongress.com