

Video transcript

How your business can thrive despite digital disruption

[On screen text:] Networking, topical, ideas, insights, innovation, Bankwest Connect Events™, Dan Stinton, The Guardian.

[Dan Stinton:]

So most of what I'll be talking about today is going to be about the media industry and my experience with The Guardian. What I'm hoping is that, because the media was one of the first industries that was disrupted by digital, that we're a little bit of the canary in a coal mine for wider industries.

So I'm hoping that I won't bore you all to tears and there will be something of relevance of my experience here, which you might be able to apply to your own industries.

And really the theme of today is we're moving quite obviously from a period of relative certainty, relative certainty to a period of uncertainty. The pace of change is only accelerating and you really have to be comfortable with that and also hire people who are comfortable with that.

And the point I make is that really we're just getting warmed up, because automation which is probably the next really substantial kind of wave to come over various business industries is really also just getting started.

This is one of I think the first, I don't think it's the first but one of the first ever editions of what was the Manchester Guardian, which is now The Guardian. It's almost 200 years ago this was published.

Now over the next 180 years, we got colour printing, we got better format so you can actually read the things without glasses, it certainly improved but the primary job of news media was kind of the same. You had a 6 o'clock deadline, you've filed your story for all that's published the next day. There were some afternoon editions but mostly it was just a daily newspaper capture of the news.

This is what we are today, so in the last really 15 to 20 years we've gone from having one newspaper to having websites, mobile apps, still the printed products, audio distribution, video and distribution to smart speakers

So what have we learnt through this process, I'm going to talk about four key lessons if you like that we have learned just in closing today.

So firstly, a clear purpose is more important than ever and by that I mean having a purpose, which is above and beyond, just we want to make a profit. Now obviously every business wants to make a profit and the more profit you make the more choices you have and the more you can do with your business.

So that should continue, but for us at least and what I have seen over the journey of my career in media is that you need to have more than to attract that right kind of people. If you are just trying to attract people who are motivated by salary, they're not going to be the kind of people comfortable with the rate of change and the pace of change which is happening in our industry and many others. So that's an important one for us.

The last two primarily relate to our journalism but I'll quickly talk through them so being meaningful, we typically don't record on Kim Kardashian. I'm sure that she does do some meaningful things on occasion but we don't really care, we will report on things that actually matter to the world and so that's sort of guides our reporting.

We could be a lot bigger by the way, we could be a much bigger news organization if we reported on Hollywood gossip and those sort of things. We deliberately don't because it's just there is more than enough of that, our whole purpose for being is to try and improve democracy as high fluent as that sounds and so we try and be meaningful in all of our reporting.

And we report fairly on people as well as power, so obviously journalism's job is to hold a power to account, we also try and uncover stories from everyday people and report on those. We did this recently with a series that we ran called life on the bread-line where we actually got people that are living in permanent poverty if you like to write about their experiences and explain that to the audience of The Guardian.

Print isn't dead. It's just different. And what we did at the end of last year, we had the Guardian weekly, which was originally in the format that you see on the left there. Had a few thousand people subscribing to it, mostly a very old demographic.

We decided to relaunch that and change the focus of it so that it was now a more of a reflective and commentary based publication if you like, so we would reflect on the bigger stories of the week and try give the context of why they are important to our audience.

And ironically, the fastest growing segment of our audience that is subscribing to this and buying this are people aged 20 to 30. No one was expecting that to be honest when we relaunched it.

But there is clearly an appetite from even young people, who want to have a tactile experience and a lean back experience and a reflective experience with print.

So I will leave it there, thank you very much.