



THE GILBANE GROUP

Cross-Media Publishing Case Study

Consumers Union

Bill Rosenblatt
Senior Analyst, Publishing Strategy & Technology
Practice, Gilbane Group
President, GiantSteps Media Technology Strategies

(212) 956 1045
billr@gilbane.com

Consumers Union

- Nonprofit US consumer advocacy organization
- *Consumer Reports*: 4.2 million circulation print magazine
- *ShopSmart*: new print magazine, newsstand only, 250k circulation
- www.consumer.org: 2.8 million paid subscribers
- Various buyer's guides, newsletters, etc.

Top-Level Organization

- SVP Information Products oversees:
 - Editorial: content creation and production
 - Publishing: business side of editorial products
 - Technical: test labs
 - Strategic Development
- Other areas:
 - Advocacy
 - Communications
 - Back office functions: IT, finance, HR, etc.

Objectives

- Get web development out from under print magazine workflow
 - Faster online content development
 - Web as soon as print (or sooner)
 - Staff motivated and measured on web content
- Step up repurposing of content
 - Editorial
 - Data from test labs
- Step up new product development
 - Print
 - Online

Legacy: Editorial Technology

- Traditional magazine publishing environment
 - MS Word authoring
 - QuarkXPress layout, transitioning to InDesign
 - OpenPages content management (EOL'ed)
- Separate web publishing environment
 - Blue Martini e-commerce
 - Percussion Rhythmx web content management

Legacy: Organization – Editorial

- CU Editorial Director
- CR magazine editorial
 - Editor-in-Chief, Managing Editor
 - Reporters and editors for subject matter areas
 - Autos
 - Electronics
 - Home
 - Finance
 - Health
- Web editorial
 - Editor-in-Chief, Managing Editor
 - Web editors
- Editorial Services (for all publications)
 - Production
 - Copyediting
 - Fact-checking
 - Design
 - Prepress

Legacy: Organization (cont'd)

- Technical Division (test labs)
 - Technical Director
 - Associate Technical Directors
 - Autos
 - Electronics
 - Home
- Publishing Division
 - Product managers
 - Marketing
 - Consumer research (surveys)

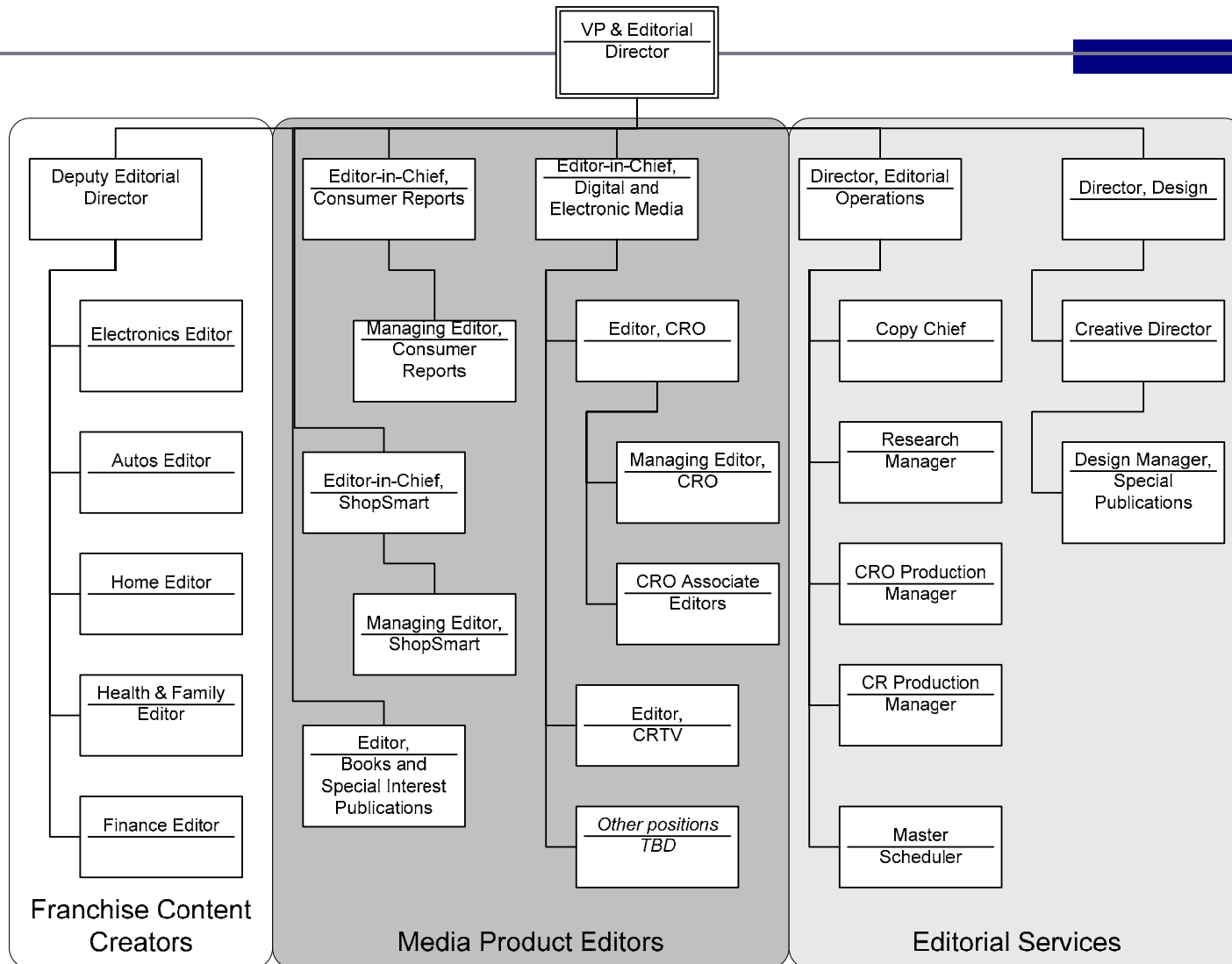
Legacy: Organization (cont'd)

- Content Development Teams (CDTs)
 - Representatives from editorial and test labs
 - Create plans for testing and editorial content
 - E.g. April Autos issue
 - Respond to needs of CR Magazine
 - Online content an afterthought
- Project Teams
 - Carry out specific projects
 - E.g., gas barbeque grills: tests, articles, etc.
- Product Teams
 - Operations for product
 - Includes editorial, marketing, production, distribution, etc.
 - Makeup depends on product

New Strategy: *Media Neutral Publishing*

- Editorial Franchises
 - Franchise Editors with staffs
 - Media-neutral content creation
 - Product editors are “clients”
 - Feed editorial products equally
 - Led by Executive Editor, Franchises
- Product Editorial groups
 - CR magazine – EiC and ME only
 - *ShopSmart* – EiC and ME only
 - Websites – EiC, ME, and web editors
 - New product editors

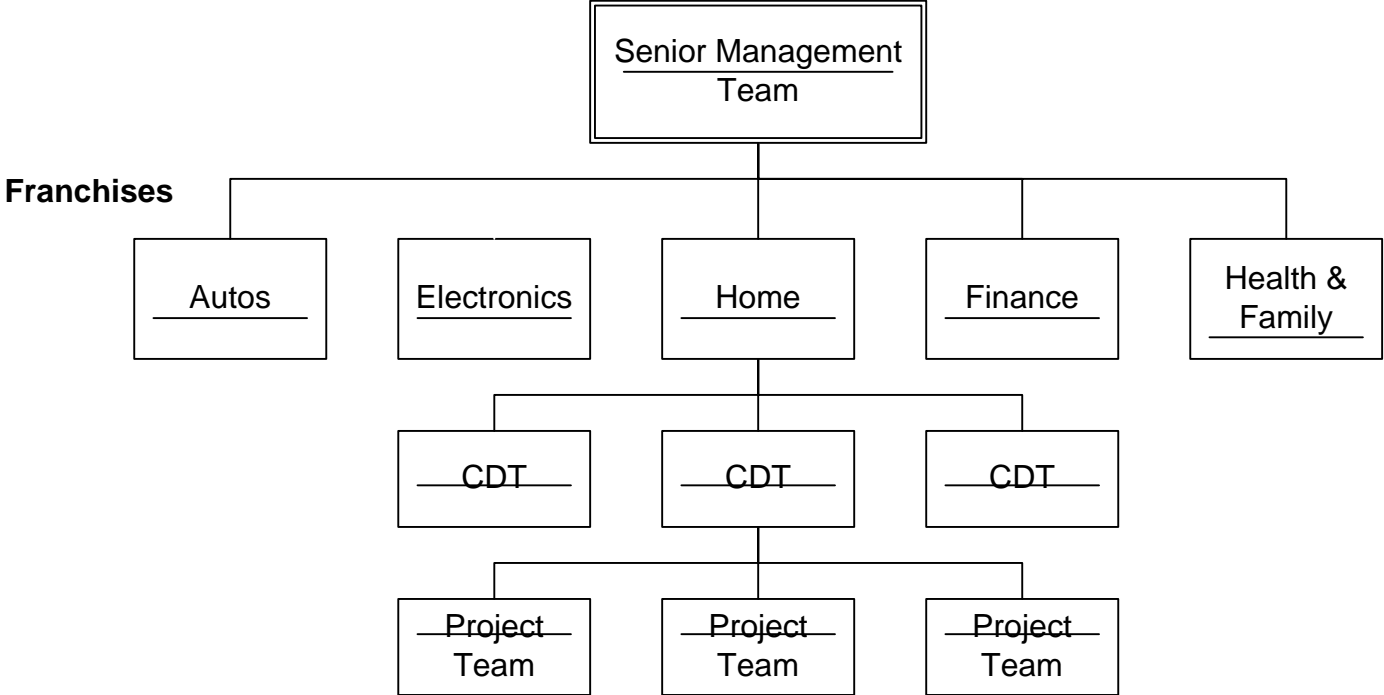
New Editorial Organization



New Strategy: Media Neutral Publishing

- Franchise Teams
 - Franchise Editor
 - Publishing representative/product manager
 - Franchise tech lead (ATD)
 - Strategy representative & others
 - Objective: set cross-media product strategy
- Franchises
 - Health and finance developed further
 - Testing areas: investment plans, baby products, etc.
- Content Development & Project Teams
 - Stay the same

New High Level Overlay Organization



Benefits

- Much faster web content development
 - E.g., daily news feeds from dedicated franchise personnel
- Frees product editors to focus on product, not staff issues
- More efficient use of staff
 - Cross-training
 - More creative thinking about uses for content
- More focus on repurposing, content leveraging
- Editorial & production schedules harmonized across media products
 - Workflow efficiencies