

The art of selling

I wish I could say there was a magic formula to selling a big or unique idea. But there isn't.

A lot of times it comes down to personality and working relationships. How do designers get away with some of their ideas?

I can't speak for anyone else but here are six tips to help push your idea over the hump and into production.

1. Trust

This takes time. Create an open line of communication – be a part of their team. Display confidence and dedication. Sports editors don't respect the art guy/girl who doesn't know sports or take it seriously.

2. Knowledge

If you have a passion for sports, bring your knowledge to the table. Often editors grow cynical to the predictability of certain topics and lower their expectations. This is a perfect chance for creative types to show how we can think differently.

3. Recruit

Establish a strong relationship with key editors and headline writers. By recruiting well-respected voices from within the department as allies you can cut through the layers that many departments have. These are your lead blockers. They'll help pave the way for you to get your ideas through because they'll feel a part of the design process. And don't forget about the photographers and illustrators. Adding talent to the team will help your vision come through.

4. Patience

You can't create paginated templates one day and then expect your sports editor to love your horizontal, all-black cover the next. Think about improving conceptually, day-to-day, while staying within your papers standards. Then, when the right project comes along (a special section) you can push for something unique.

5. Show them

A lot of ideas never get past the talking stages. Create a sketch or a rough layout. It's sometimes difficult for editors to visualize what you're talking about. They

need to see it. This will increase your chances.

6. The pitch

Involving the section editor early in the design process and making them feel comfortable is a big

first step. However, be prepared to explain your thinking and make sure you choose proper language to sell your idea. Please don't say, "I just like it, or it's different or that's my favorite color." Even if you've instinctively made

certain decisions, spend a few minutes dissecting your layout intelligently, step by step.

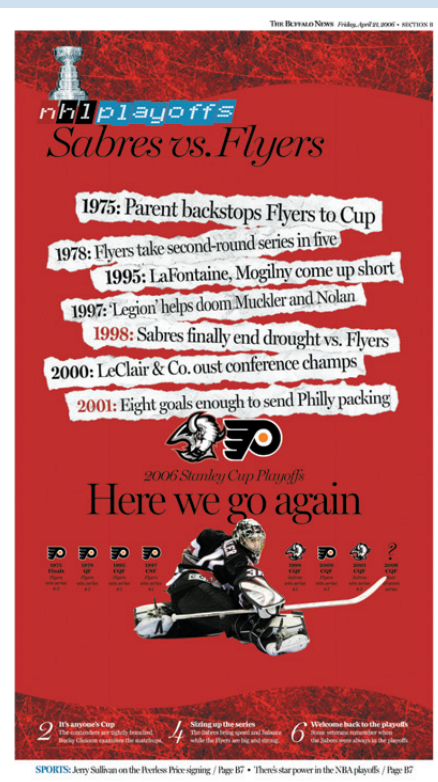
Vince Chiaramonte is Assistant Design Editor at The Buffalo News



Meet Aaron Schobel

Knowledge: *Instead of running a file photo, I chose to focus on Schobel's unheralded, unknown persona. This opened the door for an unconventional approach that utilized the headline as an art element.*

The pitch: *After creating a tight layout, I explained how the main focus of the story was accessed quicker from the headline/photo relationship, instead of waiting to read the first four graphs.*



Here we go again

Trust/Knowledge: *Having knowledge of the Sabres history with the Flyers, I pitched the idea of a rivalry cover and wrote the headlines and researched the statistics.*

Show them: *I knew a sketch wouldn't be enough to understand my vision, so I created a tight layout using Quark.*

The pitch: *I explained how the cover and it's layering of information would fire up readers and draw them inside the section.*

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