

STEVEN IBANEZ

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SUMMARY

Senior newsroom editor who has spent a career pushing journalism into the future. Expert in navigating industry shifts by reaching audiences in new spaces through video, social platforms and direct engagement. Proven track record of building modern, audience-focused teams and establishing sustainable newsroom models that allow high-impact reporting to thrive in changing times.

EXPERIENCE

Advance Local, Jersey City, N.J., *Sr. Director, Consumer Insight & Monetization* | May 2025 - Present

- Implemented Meta Monetization to generate over \$1.2 million in annual revenue, directly funding high-performance journalism and incentivizing deeper community engagement.
- Orchestrated an enterprise-wide migration to a Marfeel and Snowplow data stack; led newsroom interviews and cross-departmental requirement gathering to establish real-time performance metrics and organizational buy-in.
- Led a company-wide initiative to expand coverage through user-generated content initiatives, generating more than 5 million additional video views to social accounts for [NJ.com](#) and [PennLive.com](#). These UGC workflows strengthened coverage of [severe weather](#), [ICE protests](#) and other news events.

LoneStarLive.com, Austin, Texas, *Founding Editor* | July 2023 - April 2025

- Built a team of 15 journalists to launch LoneStarLive.com, a high-impact news publication focused on Texas; grew a loyal audience averaging more than 500,000 unique monthly visitors within six months.
- Mentored and developed a team of reporters and editors, enhancing their writing, investigative and digital skills and guiding coverage on complex Texas issues, including legislative policy, education and diverse cultural narratives.
- Directed accountability reporting with statewide impact, including an investigation into the [Austin Independent School District's relationship with a disgraced church leader](#) and an in-depth report on a [Christian college's influence on homeschool curriculum](#).
- Led a test of [GulfLive.com](#) with four reporters to cover regions along the Gulf of Mexico with trending and feature reporting. Quickly built an audience exceeding 300,000 monthly visitors through unique storytelling and breaking news coverage, [including a tour of a](#)

[nudist park](#) and an interview with a kicker who was [camping out in front of the Dolphins' facility for a chance at his dream](#).

- Differentiated the brand in a competitive media market by combining in-depth and trending reporting with user-generated videos and community engagement. UGC videos averaged more than 1 million monthly views for the fledgling brand.
- Amplified the authority and reach of our reporting by implementing a digital-first workflow grounded in journalistic expertise and trust signals (E-E-A-T), resulting in 100,000 backlinks and achieving rankings for 90,000 keywords within 12 months.
- Built a robust community around our Texas reporting, growing our social media presence to 115,000 followers and using platforms like [Reddit](#), [Instagram](#) and [TikTok](#) to make complex policy issues, breaking news and cultural conversations accessible to a younger audience.
- Architected the integration of generative AI into newsroom production workflows, leveraging tools for story ideation, research and multi-platform editing to maximize editorial efficiency.

Advance Local, Jersey City, N.J., *Director of Social Engagement* | April 2016 - July 2023

- Worked directly with Advance Local newsrooms, including NJ.com/The Star-Ledger, MLive.com and PennLive.com/The Patriot-News to craft social strategies to engage readers and develop new audience channels. Oversaw six years of growth in engagement and traffic from social platforms.
- Advised the executive team on social media and podcast strategy, shaping the company's direction through interviews with industry leaders, research and data discovery.
- Managed partnerships with large tech companies, including Meta, Google and Reddit, as early adopters of technologies for newsrooms.
- Spearheaded a combined paid and organic media program that drove a 100%+ increase in subscriber acquisition through social channels and contributed to year-over-year revenue growth.
- Optimized marketing spend to reduce subscriber attribution costs by 300% through a focus on organic engagement strategies and aligning audiences with in-depth journalistic reporting.

Advance Local, Jersey City, N.J., *Director of Training & Strategy* | October 2012 - April 2016

- Developed and executed a training strategy to transition all Advance Local newsrooms to a digital-first focus. Focused on community engagement, social media growth and establishing best practices for digital-first reporting.
- Contributed to product roadmap to support emerging platforms and journalistic trends.

Advance Local, Jersey City, N.J., *Director of Content Management Technology* | April 2008 - October 2012

- Architected Advance Local's first CMS and community engagement platform. Wrote user stories, gathered requirements from stakeholders and managed vendor and cross-departmental efforts to meet implementation goals.
- Worked with the leadership team to develop an internal communications program tailored around these transformational technologies, including detailed training, surveys and messaging to ensure a successful rollout.
- Trained more than 1,000 journalists on digital publishing and community engagement to accelerate the transition to digital-first publishing.

PennLive.com, Harrisburg, Pa., *Editor* | May 2005 - April 2008

- Hired, trained and managed a team of six journalists, providing editorial guidance and ensuring high-quality reporting.
- Developed and enforced content standards based on market research and journalistic best practices, resulting in a 55% increase in page views and a 50% increase in unique visitors within the first year.
- Directed content strategy and provided product management for the launch of lehighvalleylive.com.
- Temporarily served as an assistant editor at NOLA.com, managing editorial projects and supervising staff in the post-Katrina environment, including the creation of a citizen journalism database for missing residents.

Florida Today, Melbourne, Fla., *Online Editor* | June 2004 - May 2005

- Organized coverage around four major hurricanes, set up a robust online community using forums and implemented an analytics-based approach to news coverage.
- Implemented digital best practices to grow website traffic by over 40% year-over-year with a focus on breaking news and engagement.

The Shreveport Times, Shreveport, La., *Online Editor* | April 2002 - May 2004

- Worked directly with reporters and editors to increase newsroom participation in digital operations, leading to a 72% increase in page views.
- Coordinated breaking news and trained reporters on new reporting styles to support iterative reporting.

NOLA.com, New Orleans, La., *Digital Content Producer* | January 1998 - April 2002

- Managed homepage updates and promotional strategy to optimize audience growth.
- Covered hurricanes, Mardi Gras and national events, including the Super Bowl and Sugar Bowl. Produced videos, wrote news articles and took photos to complement coverage.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS & VOLUNTEER WORK

- National Association of Hispanic Journalists

- Asian American Journalists Association (ally)
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (serving as a Big Brother)
- Out Motorsports supporter