



THIS IS OUR STORY.

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The Birmingham News launches massive marketing effort under leadership of new publisher

Campaign marks the beginning of a new attitude for 123-year-old newspaper

Birmingham, Ala. – January 10, 2011 – This week Alabama's largest newsgathering organization, *The Birmingham News*, launched a comprehensive, multi-media marketing campaign aimed not only at increasing audience and revenue, but also at truly changing the community's perception of the newspaper.

Readers got the first glimpse of this campaign on Sunday with a four-page special section wrapping the newspaper. The section introduces the tagline "This Is Our Story" along with new icons the newspaper will be using in print and online. The campaign includes TV ads as well as outdoor advertising complete with a digital billboard featuring up-to-the-minute news through *The Birmingham News* Twitter feed.

This campaign launch culminates a year-long transformation at *The Birmingham News* that began with the January 2010 appointment of Pam Siddall as publisher. Siddall and the rest of the paper's leadership team together created a strategic plan for transforming the future of the paper.

One of the primary objectives of that strategic plan was to change the way people in the community think about *The Birmingham News*.

"For too long, we have allowed other voices to shape public perception about us and those public perceptions are inaccurate — the false perception that we're dying; the false perception people don't read us; the false perception that we are no longer relevant," Siddall said. "We've got to go on offense. We have an amazing story to tell about us to go along with the amazing stories we tell about others every day."

The Birmingham News partnered with Birmingham-based advertising agency Big Communications to put together a campaign that would be unexpected but honest.

"This campaign is about reminding the community that the newspaper offers more than just news," said Big President John Montgomery. "What comes off the press every day on 22nd Street is the knowledge we need to make our businesses better, the insight that helps us make decisions about our personal futures, and the true story of our community."

The campaign also emphasizes that *The Birmingham News* goes far beyond the print edition. The reporting done in the state's largest newsroom also lives online at al.com and in social

media. In addition, the campaign will serve as a reminder that much of the news that informs conversation across the community begins with reporting by *The News*.

All this comes packaged in advertising creative designed to capture the history of the newspaper in a way that feels progressive. View the campaign at www.bhamnews.com/ourstory.

The Birmingham News took several steps toward setting the tone for this campaign launch in 2010 by investing in its news and advertising products, by expanding its multi-media offerings, and by setting a new standard for community involvement. Changes in the last year included:

- The launch of Fast Find Auto which combines print and online auto listings and then offers consumers detailed vehicle information via online partner al.com.
- The launch of "Yes", an opt-in non-subscriber product delivering editorial and advertising content to households in select zip codes every Sunday.
- The re-vamping of News Extra, our Wednesday non-subscriber product that is delivered to more than 325,000 households weekly.
- Expanding the popular online "Bargain Mom" feature into page 2A print content
- The publication of *The Birmingham News* on **pink paper** (Oct 4, 2010) with all section fronts containing stories about breast cancer and breast cancer survivors.
- The launch of a redesigned and enhanced Business section in print, an e-mail business newsletter and a new business webpage that includes a feature allowing businesses to upload press releases, photos and other information online.
- The creation of a multi-layered iPad app documenting Auburn University's remarkable football season.

"We are going to reinvigorate our brand," Siddall said of the new campaign. "We are going to reinforce our relevancy in this community. It's as simple as that."