For the News Media Alliance, a name is more than just a brand

**By DAVID CHAVERN**

“Let’s Backrub that.” Your first reaction to that statement might be block the sender. But you might be surprised to know that if I had said those words back in 1996, I would have been referring to an Internet search. Once upon a time, [Backrub](http://www.businessinsider.com/the-true-story-behind-googles-first-name-backrub-2015-10) was the name of the iconic search engine we now know as Google. Then last year, that company decided that “Google” wasn’t a big enough term to describe all of its businesses and it rolled out the holding company “Alphabet”.

Rebrands and name changes aren’t at all unusual, even for the biggest names. But they are important because they signify evolution – in market or strategy, or both.

It’s been a busy month of change at the News Media Alliance, including [changing our name](https://www.newsmediaalliance.org/naa-name-change-news-media-alliance/) from Newspaper Association of America and implementing a strategic realignment. But I wanted to take a minute to tell you why we decided to make these changes. It is about much more than a rebrand. It signifies a changed industry.

“Newspapers” are no longer just the things delivered to your doorstep every morning. They are massive digital sites, Facebook feeds, events, VR experiences and so much more. Our printed products are wonderful things that millions and millions of people still love and rely upon. But the newspaper industry has grown to be much bigger than what the specific term “newspaper” conveys. In a very real sense, we have outgrown the term.

There is a deeply misguided perception that people don’t read “newspapers” much anymore – even though the public consumes more of our news product than at any time in history. Print has been the heart and soul of this business for hundreds of years but, going forward, we want to make it very clear that, regardless of platform, our members provide the high quality, original reporting that is critical to an informed public and a vibrant democracy. Reporting that people want and need more than ever, and that will provide the basis for a vibrant future for the industry.

We also recognize that many digital-first and digital-only businesses are creating original content and we want to involve them, as we have a lot of shared objectives such as combatting ad blocking; protecting the intellectual property riots of all publishers; and our preserving and expanding tax deductions for advertising and digital news production.

So we have an industry where people want and need the product more than ever, and where there are many vibrant, print and digital creators who are investing huge sums of money into the future that product. Not only is that not a bad place to be, it is an exciting place and we wanted to make sure that we, as representatives of that industry, have a name, brand, programs and attitude that the industry needs and deserves.

The Alliance is thrilled to represent the news media business, and we very much looking forward to telling the true story of that business -- fighting for it – for many, many years to come.