

# Investigative planning checklist:

Completing a great project starts with sound story selection. That includes asking ourselves basic questions to make sure we are pursuing the best stories and letting the lesser ones go. Be ruthless about prosecuting your original idea to make sure your work is bulletproof.

**SLUG:**

**APPROX. PUB DATE:**

**AUTHOR:**

**EDITOR:**

## 1. TARGET AUDIENCE:

- Family Forward     Know the Score     Both or other, please explain:

## 2. BENEFIT STORY FULFILLS:

### FAMILY FORWARD

- Be a better parent
- Manage my money, financial decisions
- Keep me and my family safe, healthy, fit
- Advance my career
- Be up-to-date on news/issues that IMPACT me and my family
- Develop knowledge/skills for myself, family
- Know how to best spend my family's free time, what's worth it
- Balance work/home responsibilities
- Understand issues impacting people like me

### KNOW THE SCORE

- Have informed conversations about my industry and community
- Understand how key issues influence me
- Give me an edge in the business world
- Commute easily
- Advance my career
- Manage my money and find great deals
- Make good business decisions
- Fuel my passions
- Know how to best spend my free time, what's worth it

## 3. ANGLE AND IMPACT TO CAPTURE AUDIENCE:

**THE IDEA/BUDGET BULLETS/KEY TAKEAWAYS/FINDINGS:** What is the hidden problem we aim to expose and help remedy? Discuss the benefits your story will fulfill for readers. You should be able to summarize the project in a few sentences. If you can't, it might require more focus.

**CHARACTERS:** Who are the main characters that will drive the storytelling? Is there a hero? Who are the victims?

**EARLY DIGITAL HEADLINE:**

**TELL US MORE:**

**WHY NOW?** What is the news peg/time element for the story? How does it have local relevance? Does it have regional or national play?

**OUTRAGE/SURPRISE:** What is the most surprising part of this story? What will we tell readers that they don't already know?

**COMPLETION:** How much more time and effort is required to see it through? Are there data or sources you need still? Does this project require your full attention, or can you still work on some dailies?

#### 4. SOLUTIONS THAT OFFER READER ENGAGEMENT

**SOLUTIONS/IMPACT:** What solutions are we (or experts) suggesting that will solve the problems we raise? Can we outline from experts how this problem could have been prevented or what changes should be made to avoid future harm?

**ACTION:** How can readers or the community be part of your reporting or the solution? Will we ask readers to submit their stories — by email, a phone tip line (for audio) or a Google form? Can readers contact someone or an organization for help, more details or to complain? Should they write letters to the editor?

**RESOURCES:** What resources are available to readers? Are there tips or FAQs that we should offer? If either is substantial it should be a separate post.

#### 3. DESIGN/STRUCTURE READER WILL FIND ENGAGING

##### STORY TYPE

- Mobile-friendly with subheads
- Longform
- Guide or list
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

##### VIDEO

- Staff-produced video?
- Is there a video playlist?
- Wochit video?
- Promo video?
- Audio?

##### PHOTOS

- New gallery
- Existing gallery
- Submitted photos?

##### GRAPHICS

- Poll
- Table/Chart
- Motion graphic
- Quiz
- Map
- Database
- Documents
- Document highlights
- Interactive
- Other?

**SOCIAL** – We’ll, of course, do social promotion on Facebook and Twitter (and that will be discussed in detail later in a project meeting). But in advance of that, are there creative opportunities to leverage social platforms in unique ways? Possible suggestions below, but please think of additional platforms that would speak to FF and KTS audiences.

- Social cards (graphics?):
- An Instagram story:
- A Facebook live: