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Tunnel vision on costs**Their approach**

Star management has approached these negotiations as an exercise in dramatic cost-cutting. The company says it wants to slash millions of payroll costs by savaging shift premiums, overtime and sick pay, reducing staff, shifting benefit costs to employees, reducing job security ... the list goes on and on.

Our approach

Our acceptance in recent contracts of cost-of-living wage increases already represents a major contribution to our newspaper's financial well-being. We've fallen steadily behind other, lesser papers as a result. In this round, we've tried to focus attention on areas of lost revenue where The Star could significantly address its financial challenges. The core issues we've raised are mostly in Advertising:

- The CCI and ADS computer system woes continue to cost the company big money and customers through lost billings and other needless failings.
- The ongoing experiment in Zoned advertizing has been an expensive failure. We are in effect diverting full-run, full-cost advertisers to cheaper partial-run rates – but not attracting enough new business to justify the expense.
- Commission sales have been mismanaged to the extent that most commission staff aren't making their targeted levels, and some aren't even close. This means the company is not getting the revenue it should, while other efforts go unsupported.
- The ballooning number of Special Sections and Extras has similarly seen a lot of main-run business diverted to these new products, at considerable cost and overworked staff.
- The transfer of much of our previously growing in-house Internet sales accounts from Star staff to Torstar Digital's non-Star Olive Network has resulted in a dramatic drop-off in revenue to our website.
- We lost classified ad business by ending a successful in-house effort at upselling to the Web, and sending the work outside the Star, to another Torstar Digital disaster called LiveDeal.ca.
- The loss of staff morale and trust in management as a result of these missteps – call it a lack of leadership – is a huge cost to our paper, if impossible to define.

Balance needed

We've been telling company negotiators that their single-minded efforts to reduce costs at our expense is bad for our paper and for the chances of reaching agreement without a dispute. They say they disagree, that big cuts are what the company wants. This is unfortunate.

Strike vote

Calling all members: Our strike vote meeting begins Wednesday Jan. 16 at 5 p.m. at the Westin.

Guild Bargaining Committee

Unit Chair: Maureen Dawson
 Editorial: Dan Smith and Valerie Hauch (alternate)
 Circulation: Steve Gjorkes and Jeff Bodrucky (alternate)
 Finance: Cathie Nichols and Dawn Armstrong (alternate)
 Advertising: Elizabeth Marzari and Dijana Maderic (alternate)
 Thestar.com: Craig Wattie and Tony Camara (alternate)
 Pre-Press: Lester Veszlenyi and Lorraine Wohlgemuth (alternate)



