Raise your hand if you subscribe to the Wall Street Journal, or are likely to pick up the paper tomorrow.

How many of you raised your hand?

I see one, two...

Deepwater?

Radam?

Feroz, for sure.

I peruse it sometimes.

But all in all, can we agree that many of us dont necessarily assume that the fight fan and WSJ reader demographic pool doesnt drip into each others sphere that much?

So, why then is Manny Pacquiaos promoter Top Rank putting out the effort and expense to place a half page ad in Fridays Wall Street Journal, which will tout Saturdays Manny Pacquiao fight at Cowboys Stadium in Dallas?

They are doing so for the same reason theyve been banging the drum for the rap artists Nellys pre-fight debut performance of his song Just A Dream. Because they, or more specifically, Top Ranks president Todd duBoef, has realized that the old methods of getting the word out, of publicizing the sport, needed some freshening up.

The Wall Street Journal has a demographic thats a a little older, with a little more income, higher profile people, duBoef told TSS when asked about the eyebrow-raising ad placement. The papers one of the few papers thats been reporting growth, so well try and expand our audience. Well do the campaign with them and see how it resonates.

DuBoef has been throwing a bunch of stuff at the wall, and a lot of it is sticking. Now, some of that stuff, the streaming content on TopRank.com, the updates on Facebook and Twitter, may in fact render a reporter like me less useful. But believe it or not, i dont have a problem with that. In fact, I applaud it. Since I believe there will always be a need for an objective sifter of content, someone to determine what is news and what is just PR fluff, Im not threatened that Top Rank now offers so much content direct to the consumer, instead of serving it to the press, and seeing them parcel it out, or not, as they see fit. I figure as long as I go with the flow, not fight it, not play the lamenting grumbler who yearns for the good old days, there will be a place for me. Im just happy to see some type of flow, conversations being had on how to grow the sport, occasional concessions being made by the entrenched interests who have worked so hard to

build the system to the status quo, and might not come out with the same cut if some of the rules, and rulers, change. (Anyone else see a hint of a comparison to the situation we have in the realm of our energy policy, and how the entrenched, in their mansions on the hill, work to keep the policies the same, rolling boulders down the hill to retard progression in new technologies, which they might not be the market leaders in?)

DuBoefs iPod may not be jam-packed with Nelly, but the mans eyes are open to the fact that the rapper has sold over 20 million records, that Just A Dream sold almost a million downloads its first week out. Its a great get, its fantastic, he said, enthused.

A decent chunk of the 800,000 people who follow Nelly on twitter just might check in to see what the fuss is about on fight night, and a bunch of the 1.5 million fight fans Top Rank boasts as followers on Facebook and Twitter just might hear Nellys tune, and download it off iTunes.

Synergy, baby.

Its refreshing to see it in the sport, which sometimes seems locked into the 90s, hell, the 50s, with its marketing and presentation. How long have we been ranting here at TSS, asking the powers that be to take a page from the UFC handbook, spice up the live cards, especially, spend some money on the undercards, respect the brand of boxing, offer top to bottom solid matchups, etc etc.

Well, the wheels are grinding, slower than wed like sometimes, but they are moving.

I was on the phone with Dana White a few weeks back, before he got mad at something ESPN did, or maybe something I wrote, and he stopped taking my texts. He said boxing was dying, and I disagreed. If Pacquiao and Mayweather fight, theyll each get around $40 million. If thats death, stick a fork in me, and dig a deep hole, I said.

This games not dead. Its in flux.

The athletes are still drawn to the sternest test of will and strength and guts, with the tradition of a hundred years, and Muhammad Ali, attached to it. Not as many of them are born and bred in the US, yes. But fight fans will watch a Latvian and a Martian whack away at each other if they have some of the Ward/Gatti in them.

This sport is dying is rhetoric, DuBoef said. Forget that. Im an optimist, I know how great the product is. We didnt help things by choking off the content to the consumer. Now were loosening our grip.

When apprised of Dana Whites RIP message, duBoef laughed. He just called me yesterday. He wants me to deliver the signal to him in Germany so he can watch the fight fight on Saturday. Hes a very good friend by the way, but he doesnt have to say its dying. It isnt. DuBoef says that his research shows there is only a 7-8% overlap in fanbase between MMA and boxing, somewhat surprising to me, considering I figured a guy who likes to watch fighting, likes to watch fighting. So he sees the opportunity to introduce boxing to Danas followers, and

perhaps MMA to some of the pugilism-only diehards who see men in tights hugging each other feverishly. DuBoef, in the last two years or so, got tired of waiting for the sports magazines to latch on to positive boxing stories, and the big papers to toss some ink our way. So he started offering content in the wild web yonder, and letting the fight fans gravitate toward it, and also gathering the data on fans, and sending the content to them. White got no bid from the mainstream press early, so he went to online/web route early on. Now, the mainstream pubs are aboard the UFC train, and boxing plays catchup in the new media realm.

Its a real fine time for this new media push, while we have Manny Pacquiao as the acknowledged lead dog pulling our sled. He has the skill, and the personality, and the up-from-poverty history to serve as a quite legitimate role model to any kid who might want to excel in athletics, or politics, or philanthropy. His foe on Saturday night will bring the fight to him, and wont spit the bit like Joshua Clottey did. So the 70,000 fans in attendance in Texas, and the perhaps 1.5 million who watch on pay per view in 130 different countries will fall asleep impressed with the man and the sport, hopefully. Tweet that, Dana White.