

Former Hearst CEO Frank Bennack Provides an Outlook for the Future of Media

With a drastically changing media landscape due to the advancements of artificial intelligence and rapid consolidation and acquisitions of legacy media corporations, former CEO and executive vice chairman of Hearst, Frank A. Bennack, spoke to reporters on Monday about his viewpoint of the future of American media.

Bennack, the legendary media mogul who has led Hearst through periods of tremendous growth, is no stranger to industry change. From the dot-com boom to the meteoric rise and fall of magazines to the launch of cable television giants A&E and The History Channel, it's no surprise that Bennack's comments in Monday's press conference reflect a man who's been adapting for over 70 years.

"Companies who have been successful have kept those traditional businesses vital-newspapers, television stations, magazines," Bennack said. "But have diversified into, of course, a large amount of digital, and in the case of Hearst, what's called business-to-business."

The switch to B2B media has certainly paid off, as it currently accounts for [60% of the company's total profit](#), a 45% increase over the last 15 years. The 138-year-old mainstay in American media is coming off a tremendously successful year in 2025, with a [3% increase in revenue and a newly signed contract with OpenAI](#).

“If you don’t change, if you don’t move to new opportunities, if you have a workforce that is uninterested in changing what they do, then growth is going to be hard to come by,” Bennack said. “You have to make those changes, you have to join them, and if you add them to what you already know well in those sectors, along the way you have an opportunity to grow dramatically as we have in the past.”

Bennack then shifted to what was on the minds of every reporter in the room before and after they sat down and talked with him: the one that, as Bennack put it, is the “biggest ahead”. With AI developing faster than any human person can comprehend, Bennack suggested that the media follow through with it.

“AI may be more dramatic than what I’ve talked about now(the arrival of digital),” Bennack said. “We’re not afraid of that. We’re working hard to have our people understand how to utilize that. There’s going to be both a defensive and offensive aspect to that. We’re seeing early success in early utilization of it; the best of it is yet to come.”

From [The New York Times](#) to Hearst’s own [San Francisco Chronicle](#), publications across America have AI statements about how they are using this new tech and where they are applying it. The creation and expansion of the technology has brought fears to many journalists, whether it be veterans of the industry or newcomers breaking through the college ranks.

However, Bennack explained to those in attendance on Monday that he foresees a world in which journalists are assisted by AI, rather than completely overthrown by it.

“We won’t have leaders in the future if we don’t have good, strong people entering our businesses. We have to find a way to be sure that strength of talent and ability continues, even though there will be some incentive to reduce a significant number of people and jobs below those who are directly involved in the AI aspects,” Bennack said. “It’s a changing world, but it’s one that you can conquer.”