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Countering complacency

Traveling back to Kansas on a recent Southwest flight, I was reminded of an interview I heard with the airline's co-founder and former CEO, Herb Kelleher. In a letter he wrote to employees, he cited the top 10 concerns he had for his company. Surprisingly, the No. 1 concern was Southwest Airlines itself — that the airline company might ignore competition and become complacent.

It's not hard to think of more than a few big-time companies that ignored the changing times and were eventually left behind. Failing to keep up with the digital revolution, Kodak clung tightly to film. Still relevant today, they reach a smaller market.

Blockbuster once dominated the video-rental industry, but its business model didn't reflect the changing rental habits of consumers.

I share these examples as a reminder that Angus breeders, along with the Association and its entities, must be aware of changing times.

A year later

As we look back on the past 12 months, it's been a year of changes in Angus Media. Our team recently launched its second publication redesign in just nine months. The new, four-color *Angus Beef Bulletin* hit mailboxes this month, reaching more than 65,000 of your commercial customers.

With the redesign, we've refocused our efforts with both the *Angus Journal* and the *Angus Beef Bulletin*. This past spring two teams were formed to take on the needs of two different audiences.

We have purebred breeders who are making genetics for the commercial industry and then we have the commercial side composed

of cattlemen who are looking for different information. We now have the dedicated staff to allow the two publications to better serve our members, readers and advertisers.

In addition to restructuring, we've responded to industry signals and are investing in technology for breeders to keep their marketing costs down.

In the spring of 2019, a one-of-a-kind sale book builder will be available through Angus Media. This new technology is important because it will, first, give breeders a hands-on experience when creating their sale books. However, if you want a hands-off approach, we will still offer that service.

Second, expected progeny differences (EPDs) in the sale books will be live. Each time Angus Genetics Inc. updates the genetic evaluations, EPDs in your sale book will reflect the current EPDs instantaneously.

We are adding new features to printed materials. On sale day you can print a sale-date book with the best set of EPDs available and buyers can have it in hand — providing them with current information and easing sale-day stresses for breeders and management. This technology is bringing the once-dead sale book back to life.

In the near future you will have even more digital and web

opportunities, and we have the data to back up your marketing decisions with Angus Media. The Angus sale book webpage has 42 million page views and counting, with 1.2 million unique visitors. We added video to sale books and had more than 748,000 views on 4,000 animals.

When attending Angus Convention this November, be sure to sign up for the marketing workshop. Staff will present the sale book builder and all advantages and tools available by Angus Media.

This year's National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) was one of the best as we celebrated 50 years of Angus youth competing in and out of the show ring. Congratulations to all our junior members and families who traveled to Madison, Wis., and thank you to Jaelyn Upperman, Caitlyn Brandt, their crew and staff, and the Wisconsin and Illinois hosts who worked so hard to make this a premier Angus family event.

Through these changes and ones to come, there's a common thread: We work each day to improve customer experience and stretch your marketing dollars.

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