

PUBLISHING YOUR OWN MAGAZINE

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Does your organisation do great work but lacks visibility? Is your problem of a more financial nature? A magazine could solve either or both your problems. But not everyone knows how to publish one. This article will explain that process, and how exactly a publication can help your organisation.

THE PLANNING

A monthly or a yearly publication can serve many purposes for your organisation. This organisation could be your school, a cultural club, a local football team or even a budding political alliance. What matters is what purpose you want your publication to serve. With proper planning, that purpose can be achieved. If you want a profit, earn more money than what you will be spending on the publication. If you don't want a profit, break even by earning back the money spent. If your organisation has enough funds to bear the financial responsibilities of the publication, then that's that.

CREATING CONTENT

It's always better to have a dedicated team for creating content. This team must consist of writers, editors, photographers and graphics designers. The numbers of each depend on the volume of work. These people should know your target demographic, and exactly what you're trying to achieve with this publication. The content they provide should be relevant to the organisation's activities.

At first, the work should remain separate with different groups of workers, and obviously a leader to coordinate them; this individual is called the "editor". There is a certain order to how these things work. The writers do the first bit, then the photographers are briefed on what pictures to get, and then the graphic designers bring it home with page layouts, a cover design, and whatnot. All the articles and photos should match the sizes of the page they will be on. The editor supervises and gives clearance, contributing with content when he has to. If it's a magazine focusing on photography, the photographers do the bulk of the work.

If most of the content comes from

student or member submissions, it requires a lot of editorial work, thus more time. It's always a good idea to create a timeline beforehand for getting different bits of work done, and bringing it together in the end.

You need to choose a printing press which will publish your magazine. Most printing presses will ask for the pages to be prepared in the .eps file extension. The graphic designers will know what this is and how to prepare them using Adobe Illustrator, InDesign or Photoshop. InDesign is the most widely used software for it. Make sure



you have backward compatibility on in your InDesign save file. Another safety measure is to have several versions of your files because a lot of printers in Bangladesh don't use the latest software. InDesign CS, Adobe Illustrator 8 are good rules of thumb. Make sure the "Maximize PSD File Compatibility" option is checked when saving a Photoshop file. For Illustrator, always have your fonts and strokes outlined if possible. The printers may not have the font and the strokes may not scale well.

FINANCING THE PROJECT

Let's assume that making money with your publication isn't the purpose; it's exposure that you want. Ask yourself if you can afford to run a loss for that publicity or if you want to break even. Breaking even sounds better but that means you'll have to earn back the money you spend on the publication and that can be tough; you might have to make compromises with the quality of your publication, or make room for ads, and everybody hates ads. If

your organisation has money, and you can't commit

to hard work, prepare to run a loss.

Now there are two ways to cover the expenditure of your publication: you can sell your magazine to interested readers, or you can put up space for advertisement. The more viable of the two options has to be chosen. If you think both can be done, do both. The total expenditure has to be carefully calculated and it should match the amount you can earn through ads and/or sales. If you want to sell, make sure you publish exactly the number of copies people will buy, less maybe, but

definitely not more. If you wish to make a profit, simply earn back MORE than what you'll be spending.

To calculate how much you need to spend, you have to keep up communication with the printing press. Tell them your requirements: size, number and quality of the pages; how many of them should be in colour; how many copies you want etc. If you plan to sell, you could take advance payments to make sure no copies remain unsold. You'll be running a loss for each copy that remains so.

Getting advertisers is easy for the major national daily newspapers. But for your publication, you will have to go and ask. It always helps to have connections, your organisation might have former members in powerful places or your members might know the right people. You could also meet some marketing directors yourself, convince them that advertising in your publication will help their business.

It is necessary to carefully calculate how much money you can earn back by selling at a reasonable rate and/or through ads. The amount expected from ads has to be divided between the number of pages available for them, with different rates for sizes and quality of page, and these rates have to be presented to the advertisers as formal proposals. Collect the ads from the advertisers as digital files and insert them into the page files that are in the .eps format.

THE LAST BIT

Now it's time to go to the press. There are many suitable presses in the Katabon area of Dhaka who'll serve your purpose. They will do the all the work but it is important to stay there and repeatedly go over the final draft to make sure there aren't any mistakes.

Once they've been published, you can sell your publication or distribute them as you wish. If people buy your publication, they are already interested in your organisation, interested enough to help it financially. There's money and publicity for you. If you wish to distribute it for free, give it to people who are likelier to take an interest. Send it to people who you know will spread the word. Every person who picks up that magazine will know the name of your organisation, and I believe that is exactly what you were after the whole time.

