

HOW TO START AND PRODUCE A MAGAZINE OR NEWSLETTER

4th Edition

This Month: 2005

Our Magazine



Jenny
wins a
movie
role

New fashion lines
in Main Street

Fruit picking time is here



Gordon
Wolf

New
bosses
at the
mill



Bakery named for
state's top loaf

net and TV Guide List
page

More information

On our web site you will find contacts for more information on publishing in general and on the publishing of formatted publications such as newsletters, magazines and newspapers.

You will also find any corrections and updates to this book and you can subscribe to our *Format* newsletter which is distributed about twice a month.

We also invite e-mail comments and will try to answer any further questions you may have.

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<http://www.worsleypress.com/magbook-private>

which requires the following to enter:

username: magbook

password: mb2004

Our general publication production website is at:

<http://www.worsleypress.com/pubprod/>

and you will find much general information freely available there.

About the Author

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Introduction

A lot more than laying out pages

This book will be invaluable to the hands-on magazine or newsletter publisher — the person starting or running a magazine or newsletter who will take on a major active role in all aspects of management and production. The person in a management role in a larger publishing organization will also find it useful in assisting them to understand the processes and what other people are doing.

There is a lot more to producing a magazine or newsletter than knowing how to lay out pages on a computer, so this is not a computer book. It certainly includes a goodly number of hints on how to use your computer to produce a magazine or newsletter. But it is not intended to take the place of whatever manuals came with your desktop publishing program.

It *is* intended to help with all the problems computer manuals do not cover ... everything you need to know to plan and produce your own publication.

As you will see, there is much more to producing a publication than just the physical task of arranging words and pictures on paper. That is why, although this book was first published before desktop publishing became the norm, there is much that remains virtually unchanged.

However, for this fourth edition, substantial parts of the chapters on the physical side of production have been rewritten despite being previously completely rewritten for the third edition — and the book has again grown in length.

Changed roles of printer and publisher

Power to do the job badly

Much that used to be a printer's job is now in the hands of the publication staff — be it fully-paid professional staff or the lone amateur editor. Desktop publishing — the ability to have the basic equipment for producing a publication within a package costing just a few thousand dollars — has meant that there are many more publications around.

It has also meant that there are many bad publications around. We now have even greater power to do the job badly!

But why a publication at all?

Everyone wants to know what is going on in any field that concerns them, whether it is the world at large or the local football club.

The committee of every club will, at some stage, consider producing some form of magazine or newsletter to keep the members informed

Chore or an exciting job?

— often to correct the misinformation produced by the notoriously unreliable word-of-mouth system.

Similarly, every company employing more than a handful of staff, or with more than a few dozen customers may consider how it will keep in touch with those customers, and a newsletter or house magazine is one of the more cost effective solutions.

To someone will fall the task of producing the newsletter. If that someone is you, will it become a chore or can it be an exciting job? For me, publications have always represented excitement. At school, it was a wall-newspaper, with each column typed individually on an ancient upright Imperial which had a letter ‘t’ that had dropped and looked like a ‘+’ sign.

When I started work, my hobby, as a not-very-good jazz musician, took on a new importance when I became the teenage editor of a duplicated magazine for local musicians.

Editorial duties extended to turning the handle on the well-worn manual Gestetner duplicator to produce the few hundred copies. Then, at work, I added to my stores clerk job the duties of editor of the properly printed staff association magazine.

Magazines and zines

Amateur enthusiasm and lateness

That initial music magazine was little different to the many “zines” which grew out of the fan magazines of that era. “Zine” is sometimes described as an abbreviation of “magazine” but it is more often described as coming from “fanzine” which was itself a merging of the words “fan magazine” typified by the many magazines put out by official and unofficial fan clubs of musicians, groups, singers, etc. in the 1960s to 1980s. What they had in common was an amateur enthusiasm and a tendency for that to result in each issue being later than the previous one. Photocopying led to a boom in such magazines: photocopy the A4 or Letter size sheets, fold them, staple them, and there was a “real” magazine.

In my own progress, we found a printer for our home-produced magazine, and by a process more like Topsy than a business plan, the hobby publication changed shape, title and readership to become a demanding small-circulation trade journal that was read throughout the world, and took me overseas frequently. It even had sections in German and Italian, languages I do not pretend to understand. To keep up I had to leave my “day job” (I had by then moved on to a farming magazine).

Since that time I have published and/or edited magazines about music and photography, and one that listed ‘What’s On’ details for Sydney. I have edited a country town newspaper and a group of regional newspapers

bringing out a paper every day, and have run a small-offset printing plant. I have been chief sub-editor for a group of suburban newspapers and a sub-editor on two of Australia's largest-circulation magazines. I have trained the staff of several provincial newspapers in production using desktop publishing methods and, more recently, bought, run and sold, a small-town newspaper. I have also handled the layout and production of a wide range of small, and not-so-small, publications. In combination with that I ran a business training in publication production and looking at means of improving publication methods.

In those several decades of publishing, the methods of production have ranged from typing stencils to handling page make-up on a computer. I have turned the handle on a duplicator and operated a printing press, set type by hand, Linotype, IBM Composer and by mainframe and desktop computer, as well as pasting-up page layouts, both physically and on screen, and making plates.

Excitement of a new edition

**They are
never
perfect**

Still there is an excitement with every new edition. They are never perfect, but each improves the next. As a journalist, I enjoy writing, but I enjoy the production of a publication more. I also realized in the early stages of my writing career that it mattered little how good the words are if the publication does not get printed and distributed in time to reach the readers for whom it is intended. Their reaction is what really matters and which provides the satisfaction, enjoyment and justification for what is printed. I hope in this book to pass on some of that enjoyment and to explain some of the short cuts I have found along the way.

To provide some sequence to the book, we will look at what may be a small social club newsletter and follow its growth through systems suited to progressively larger circulations. We will consider how a first issue of a new publication for a small group of specialists might be planned. Then we will deal with the problems of economics and distribution, whether by subscription or through newsstands and other retail outlets on a national or even international basis. We will also look at the most recent of magazine productions, the "e-zine" distributed via the Internet, at its simpler cousin, the e-mail newsletter, and at ways of creating a "web presence" for a print publication.

May I also suggest that this is the kind of book which you may need to scan through on many occasions after reading it a first time. There is likely to be information which will not be of interest at first, but which will become very important as you enter other stages of publication production.

Since magazine production is a highly interactive affair, it is also likely there will be valuable information about topics in sections other than those which deal principally with those topics. In many cases these are cross referenced by margin notes. The production of magazines or newsletters consists of many interrelated tasks and small actions in one area may have a major effect on other aspects of the production.

**Watch and
learn**

Even though you may be concerned with only one part of the production, it helps greatly to know what happens to your work in other parts of the process. Therefore take every opportunity to visit service bureaus, printing plants, and the offices and production areas of other publications. Everything you see will help you understand the total process and how the stages meld together for smooth production. You may also see how you could take shortcuts which may make the work easier.

The thought of growing your own publication from a photocopied news-sheet to a nationally or internationally circulating magazine is not so far fetched as you might think. It is the way my first magazine grew and it is how others are growing magazines today.

Chapter 1

The first steps

Correcting rumors

Almost every organization of any size either has a magazine or would like to have one. It can help keep an organization together — keeping members who cannot attend every meeting in touch with what is going on and introducing personalities to new members so that they feel more at home. It can remind those present at meetings of what was agreed and can encourage participation by detailing more about plans than can be given while maintaining a high level of attention.

Even in a business where everyone is in contact every day, a newsletter can be valuable. It can help explain company decisions in simple terms, maintaining goodwill and enthusiasm. It can also be used to correct rumors before they reach damaging proportions. In a similar way, such a journal can maintain contact between a business and its customers.

Need not be expensive

A newsletter or magazine need not be expensive to produce, although the importance of such publications is indicated by the high level of spending on internal house journals (to employees) and external ones (to customers) by many major companies. They maintain them even, perhaps especially, during periods when other departments are faced with major economies. Such points indicate the importance of a magazine or newsletter, but how do you set about starting one?

The first trade magazine

Let us say the social club meets every month. It is likely that many members would forget just when unless they receive a reminder a few days before. While you are sending out a notice, you may like to add a few notes about what is going to happen and reports on what has happened. It could be just a photocopied sheet, but if you give it a title, you have the beginnings of a publication. In fact the very first trade magazines were catalogues published by a London chemist who added articles to ensure they were read.

Registration seldom needed

I am often asked whether a magazine has to be registered in some way. The simple answer for most countries is no — that is one of the

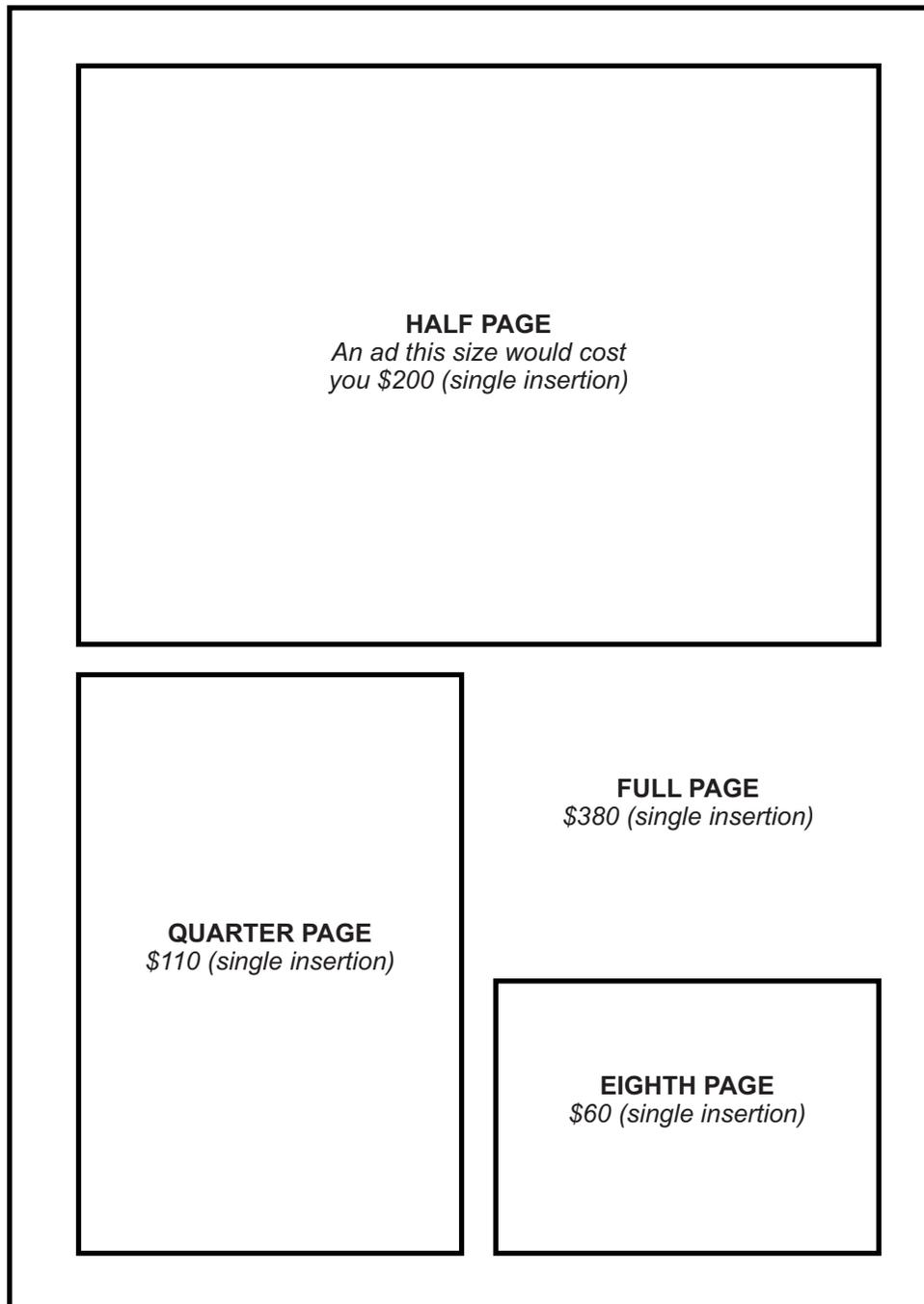


Fig.1-1: An idea for an advertisement leaflet which shows sizes and prices of ads visually. Watch as would-be advertisers start to sketch in what they want — and you will know you've made a sale!

Chapter 2

The Editor's desk

What is copy?

The material gathered to fill a publication is known among journalists as copy. Much copy is now produced in electronic form, which saves on one of the greatest expenses of publishing — typesetting. But there are many points to consider in specifying the format for receiving copy.

Regardless of the method, you will need to have a clear idea of what sort of content you want, which means clearly working out who your readers are and the kind of stories they want to read. The words story and article are interchangeable in this kind of use — the word 'story' does not carry the implication of being fictional or 'made up' that it does to the general public.

If you want a magazine of short, snappy items, you will not want to receive a treatise of several thousand words. So set out the kind of articles you want and the number of words. If you are running a club magazine then ask for, say, 200 words on what happened on the club's last social outing, to be written so that it will be understood and enjoyed by members who did not go (meaning that it must not have too many in-jokes and disguised references to strange things that happened to individuals).

If it is for a company's house magazine and is a description of a new process, suggest that the author writes it so his or her spouse can understand it.

Ask contributors to prepare their copy in a format that will suit you, but be reasonable.

Receiving the copy

Set out what you want

The most common ways to receive copy are by e-mail and on disk, the most common format now being on CD. Whatever way you prefer, it will pay to set out what you want and in what formats, and put these in a file, perhaps a PDF (portable document format) file which you can send to contributors, or as a web page made available on your web site. If you can expect copy to be submitted on disks, it is reasonable to expect these to be on PC format disks as Macs can read and write PC-formatted disks but not all PCs can read those formatted for the Mac.

There are however a number of computer programs at little or no cost

Chapter 3

Advertisements

Most of the income

Whenever a free publication is poked in a letterbox, it seems that someone is bound to ask “But how do they make it pay?”

It is an unfortunate fact of publishing life that most publications make most of their income from advertisements, and while that becomes especially noticeable with free publications, it somehow remains hidden for most people in others — even if the little they pay for a massive weekend newspaper would not buy a scrap pad of a fraction that size at the same newsstand.

This is particularly unfortunate for small publications which do not have a big appeal to advertisers as it makes the cover price seem excessively expensive by comparison.

So a first major consideration you have to make with a new magazine or newsletter is whether you will take advertisements, and the extent to which there will be a demand for space from advertisers. You also have to decide what proportion of costs you intend (or hope) to cover from advertisements.

Let us start simply. You currently have the meeting reminder notice that we mentioned in an earlier chapter, and propose turning this into a monthly newsletter.

Your present costs are for paper and postage — with photocopying time and typing donated. As a magazine it will initially have similar costs,

Using PDFs

You may decide to have a printed cover, carrying advertisements, and in the previous editions of this book we have suggested you consider getting quotes for printing these in sufficient quantities for six or 12 months.

Now we would suggest getting the ads set professionally if you aren't sure you can do them to a sufficient standard yourself, and for these to be supplied as PDF files either for the complete sheet or pages. You can then either print them on your own printer as needed from the free Adobe Reader program (formerly known as Acrobat Reader) or you can incorporate the PDF files into the word processing or page layout program you are using for your editorial pages.

The complete file can then be saved as a PDF and taken to a copyshop or print centre if the required number is too many to print out yourself.

One warning: it is normally not a problem to include a PDF within a

file that will be itself made into a PDF, but there are limits to the number of iterations so if the original PDF includes graphics which are themselves in PDF or EPS format, and you then ask your printer to print groups of pages (which he could do by putting PDFs together) you could reach that limit. Don't worry with small publication jobs but do be aware that if you do hit a problem, this just might be the cause.

You may be surprised at how little extra it costs to print a larger number of covers, perhaps sufficient for several issues, and plan to overprint the date or issue number on a laser printer or photocopier, but consider how likely it is that an advertiser may move or change their web site or e-mail address which could mean scrapping the lot.

On the other hand it is possible to make small changes in a PDF using the full Acrobat program (not just the free Reader), or in a word processor or layout program you can always do the equivalent of a paste-up correction: place a filled box over the error and type in the new material.

Think of some rates

If you decide that you will have advertisements on three of the four cover pages then two of them may be divided into halves and the other into quarters (or any other combination you think you can sell). You can divide the total cost you wish to cover (let us say \$400) by three pages, to give \$134 a page, and by halves and quarters to give \$62 a half page and \$31 a quarter.

Now depending on your potential advertisers, that may sound very little, or it may seem a lot, even for a year's advertising. But it is the minimum, or else you will not be paying for the cost of the extra cover.

You may decide that the rates should be \$300 a page, \$160 a half and \$85 a quarter. I have plucked these figures out of the air, and I suggest that as a starting point you do the same, to see how they look as value for money in terms of what the advertiser will get and in what income you may need.

If you have been given (or have calculated) a separate typesetting cost for the advertisements, as you may be for a more substantial printing order on a complete magazine, you may like to base the rates on the actual space as a proportion of the total revenue needed, plus the actual typesetting cost for each space, rounded to the nearest dollar or 50 cents.

Spreadsheet for 'what if' calculations

*Download
this file —
see page 4*

This is what we have done to produce the advertisement rates and revenue spreadsheet which you can download from our web site. This is shown in Fig.3-1 and allows for a wide range of "what if" calculations.

In the example shown here we have a 16-page magazine and have decided that we should aim for a quarter of that to be advertisements (not

MAGAZINE OR NEWSLETTER AD RATE AND INCOME CALCULATOR

(Cells that can be changed are shown in Blue: use Tab key to move through them)

The things we need to know:

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------|
| No of pages in typical issue: | 16 |
| Maximum percentage of ad pages: | 25% |
| Full page suggested rate: | \$500 |
| Extra % for smaller ads: | 5% |
| Discount % per series step: | 10% |
| Weekly or monthly (W/M): | M |
| Approx % at repeats for series of: | 3 20% |
| | 6 20% |
| | 12 30% |

Any of the items in blue can be changed and these changes will be reflected in the rest of the spreadsheet. Most are self explanatory but the percentage entry for smaller ads is the jump in price at each level, e.g. a 10% jump will mean that where a full page costs \$100, a half page costs half that plus 10% (\$55) and similarly a percentage reduction would apply for each series step.

Your rate card could look like this:

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| No of insertions: | 1 | 3 | 6 | 12 |
| Full page: | \$500.00 | \$450.00 | \$405.00 | \$365.00 |
| Half page: | \$262.50 | \$236.30 | \$212.70 | \$191.70 |
| Quarter page: | \$137.90 | \$124.10 | \$111.70 | \$100.70 |
| Eighth page: | \$72.40 | \$65.20 | \$58.70 | \$52.90 |
| Sixteenth page: | \$38.10 | \$34.30 | \$30.90 | \$27.80 |

Mix of ads

| | | | |
|--|---|------------------|------------------------|
| Total number of ad pages: | 4 | Cumulative total | Revenue at full rates: |
| <i>Enter various combinations below to see effect on revenue</i> | | | |
| No. of full pages: | 2 | 2.00 | \$1,000.00 |
| No. of half pages: | 2 | 3.00 | \$525.00 |
| No. of quarter pages: | 2 | 3.50 | \$275.80 |
| No. of eighth pages: | 1 | 3.63 | \$72.40 |
| No. of sixteenth pages: | 2 | 3.75 | \$76.20 |
| | | | \$1,949.40 |
| After calculating for the proportion of repeat ads... | | | |
| Likely revenue per issue: | | | \$1,656.99 |

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These are the two areas in which details can be changed. All other figures change as a result of entries in these sections

Fig.3-1: This income and rate calculator is available free on this book's web site. See page 4 for details.

necessarily as four complete pages, but a total equivalent to the space of four pages).

I should give an explanation of three entry items which seem to cause some confusion. The "extra % for smaller ads" is the percentage by which a smaller ad price is more than its proportion of the bigger one; for example if this is set at 5%, a half page will be 5 per cent more than half a full page rate, so if a full page is \$500, a half page will be \$262.50 ($500/2 \times 1.05$). The discount for a series of ads means, if that is set to 5%, that if a full page is \$500, the rate for each ad when a page is taken in each of three issues will be \$450 (500×0.95).

Because revenue can be reduced quite dramatically if you get more ads

Chapter 4

Producing the publication

What will you do for yourself?

With the advent of desktop publishing and its advancement to include equipment which, while much smaller than the machinery it replaces, is no longer the kind which will fit on a standard office desk, your major decision with a publication may well be to decide just how much you are going to do yourself or in your own office.

Our original “do it yourself” chapter was well back in the first edition of this book because publications were still normally produced with typewriters and drawing tools, and then passed to what in effect were large engineering works to assemble the pages and print the copies.

Ease of production has increased the number and range of publications, but it has also increased the number of poorly produced publications. If you decide to handle much of the work yourself, or in your own office, there are still skills to be learned or skilled people to be hired.

In later chapters there are descriptions of many of the processes of producing a magazine and all of the points made will apply equally if you handle any parts of the process yourself. The chapter on economics may help in deciding whether you should.

Dividing line between publisher and printer

A line that's blurred

The dividing line between publisher and printer is no longer sharp, and it is becoming increasingly common for large and small publishers to handle in their own office substantial parts of what used to be the printers' job.

Now, much of that work can be carried out with equipment you can buy from the local computer or electrical store.

But just how much should you really do for yourself? For example, page layout programs like InDesign, PageMaker and QuarkXPress will run on a more or less standard office computer, but all these programs have a fairly solid learning curve. You cannot just open the package and set to work. That is not to say that you cannot learn to use them — I have seen people who have worked wonders with a few hours of tuition, and many of the leading operators in this field were self taught.

Similarly, the almost universal image manipulation programme,

Chapter 5

Photocopying or laser printing

Improving on a meeting notice

The next three chapters follow the progress of a magazine from the more basic methods of production to the most advanced, from photocopying to computerised processing. We start with photocopying or laser printing which might be ideal for a publication up to a few hundred copies in the home or office or up to 1000 on the kind of equipment used by a quick copy printer.

As an example, a newsletter for a small club needs perhaps a hundred copies, probably monthly. You have previously had a reminder of monthly meetings printed out from a computer via an inkjet printer and copies run off on photocopier, using standard letter, A4, legal or foolscap paper. It runs from top to bottom of each page and maybe two or three sheets are stapled together in the top left hand corner. How can it be improved?

The first possibility is to type the whole thing on half-size pages so that two pages can appear alongside each other on the full sheet folded in half and several such sheets can be stapled along the spine (saddle-stitched) to form a magazine.

You can print the master copy of each page singly and stick them together afterwards; you only have to remember whether you are typing a left or right hand page, whereas with two together you have to work out beforehand which page faces which in the finished job (though most low-cost page layout programmes will work this out for you).

Arranging the pages (imposition)

Pairing pages

This is a good point to mention how to check that the right pages are paired properly for printing. The numbers of two pages on the same side of the same sheet will always add up to one more than the total number of pages in the publication. Hence, in a 16-page magazine, pages 1 and 16 (total 17) are printed together, as are pages 2 and 15 (total 17), 3 and 14, and so on, with the centre spread being pages 8 and 9. Odd numbers are always on the right, even numbers on the left.

This works until you get so large that you have to change from saddle stitching to a square-back format, but by then you will be printing on large presses and the printer will give you what is called an imposition

Chapter 6

Short run printing

Digital presses

The next step is digital printing, also known as POD (or print-on-demand) or small offset printing. These are very different processes but overlap in the fields they cover.

While most quick printing centres offer printing on digital units which are effectively large photocopiers, either black and white or color, and printing with toner, many also have small offset machines using inks. Because copiers have a relatively static cost for each copy (savings being mainly in administration time) whereas offset presses have a substantial up-front cost for making a plate but are much cheaper for each copy printed, there will be a figure for the number of copies at which the advantage moves from one to another. This will vary from one printer to another and while it is common to talk of this being at around a run of a thousand copies, this is by no means a definite figure. I have seen digital jobs come in cheaper for well over the thousand copies, and for offset jobs to win on a few hundred.

This is also an area where changes in equipment are occurring quickly.

Small offset

Convenient size

Small offset presses range from table-top machines that are little different in appearance from duplicators up to stand-alone presses which can handle, usually, up to A3 or tabloid size paper or slightly larger.

Tabloid or A3 folds in half to produce a convenient quarto-magazine format similar in size to most magazines you see on bookstalls.

The simplest system with small offset is to use a thin plastic plate which can be printed direct on many laser printers. Originally these plates required laser printers which fused the toner to the material at a higher temperature than is required for printing on paper.

Such plates cost a matter of a dollar or two, but they do have some limitations — they will not hold large areas of even tints, so you may have problems with large sizes of type and with large areas of grey even behind type. These plates are produced in a range of qualities to suit runs from a couple of hundred up to several thousand.

Chapter 7

On a larger scale

Sending your magazine to a printer

NOW let us consider what may be called the properly printed magazine. It is now common for the printer to just have the press or presses, with the likely inclusion of a pre-press section, where completed computer files of pages will be received from the publisher, and imposed into the sets of pages in the sequences required for printing. They may offer limited services to correct problems with those files, but generally the work of assembling pages will be carried out either by the publisher or by a service bureau or graphic design house.

Service bureaus and designers may also carry through the work to the stage of producing film ready to be made into plates. However, as more printers are adopting computer-to-plate technology where the image from a computer file is sent direct to the press with no intermediate film and plate stages, it is becoming the industry norm for pages to be supplied as “portable document format” (PDF) computer files.

In later chapters we will take you through the stages of page production using your own computer equipment. This will also serve to explain what happens at a design studio or service bureau if you choose to have such specialist handle this part of the work.

Using the software — Chapter 14, page 145

Finding the right specialist

The right printer for the job

All printers specialize to some extent and so, while it is always possible that you may get good price and service in certain circumstances when you are the only magazine handled by a printer who is involved mainly in some other field, it is generally true that the best service and price will come from a printer who specializes in magazines.

Also, such a printer will probably have a few formats that best suit his equipment. He will be able to produce other formats but in general, assuming that you will be looking for the best job at the lowest price, you will be best served by seeking a format within the range the printer already knows well.

If you have an example of what you have in mind, perhaps a magazine from another publisher which is similar to the publication you are planning, give several printers a copy of it, together with a specification,

Dear Sirs

Please provide a quotation for a magazine printed on a regular basis in accordance with the following specification.

1: Frequency: Monthly

2: Run: 2000 approx

3: Publication day: 8th of month

4: No. of pages: 48 plus cover

5: Page size: 275 x 210mm

6: Paper stock: Cover to be on 100 gsm gloss coated stock, rest on 60 gsm super-calendered (alternatives will be considered, please supply samples).

7: Color: Full color required on cover only, second color on specific runs.

8: Artwork: Pages to be supplied as composite PDF files.

9: Final artwork to be in printer's hands 10 days prior to publication. Flow of pages to be as required by printer.

10: Illustrations: Grayscale pictures to be included in artwork — approx. 2 halftones per page.

11: Proofs: Blue-line proofs from film are to be provided before platemaking. Press times are to be advised so that press copies can be approved.

12: Other requests: Please quote run-on per 100, and per 4 or 8pp extra. Also, cost of color inside.

13: Delivery: To be collected.

Yours sincerely,

Fig.7-1: An example of how an RFQ (request for quote) might look.

Chapter 8

Service Bureau or DIY

Between publisher and press

DO you do the page production work yourself or use a service bureau or graphic design service? This aspect of printing and publishing is in constant flux; when I first wrote this book service bureaus did not exist, when the second edition was published there were a few printers who were beginning to separate their prepress services, by the time of the third there were thousands and now it is normal for a publisher to employ some services between their own office and the printer. Printers tend now to be the people with the presses and probably have some people who will deal with jobs which arrive as files that need some work before creating film or plate. Most page production work, if not handled by the publisher, is the work of a graphics or service bureau and some are equipped to turn out film or fully imposed files ready for plate making or for use on direct-to-press systems. Many of service bureaus, because of the increasing call for quality means of color proofing, have entered into offering digital printing services. In this way the line between bureau and printer is again becoming blurred.

For the publisher, taking on the page production task can involve considerable outlay on computers, software and other assets, and while this may be cheaper over a lengthy period, using outside services does allow quick changes of direction for the business.

Laser output

All you need?

More on process cameras — page 86

For some newsletters and magazines, the output from a laser printer may be all you ever need. This is sent to the printer who, for short runs, copies it on what is effectively a scanner (like that which you may have attached to your computer), or turns it into printing plates by photographing it onto film using a process camera. Other methods can include printing on to a kind of tracing paper which is used as if it was film, or direct on to the plastic plates used by small offset presses.

The output from laser printers is improving to come closer to that of film output devices like imagesetters, but there may be a problem in the number of generations in the process. If the laser printer outputs to paper, that paper may have to be turned into film, which in turn has its image

Chapter 9

Producing the pages

Changes happening now

PRODUCTION of large scale magazines is changing dramatically, with many introducing systems based on equipment little different to that which you can have in your own office or home.

The difference is in the size of networks for computers and in overall file management through what are called integrated systems.

These enable copy to be entered by the journalist, viewed by department and senior editors, transferred to queues (actually special computer directories or folders) according to the section of the publication in which they are to appear, and then to particular page queues. They will be edited by sub-editors who add codings for all typesetting changes, and then referred back to a senior sub-editor who will check details and transmit the copy to a design and layout section

Similarly the ads will be prepared in a variety of programs and saved in formats which can be brought into the page layout system.

This can require dozens of terminals and several server computers with massive storage capabilities that, with daily newspapers, will store the total input of agency news services for several days, together with the current, last edited and original versions of every story. All advertisements likely to be repeated or used as a basis for new ones will also be stored.

As you have at home

However, the basic equipment used and the computer programs used on a much smaller publication, even one run from a home office, may well be identical. The computerisation of accounts and mailing lists will be dealt with in the later business chapters of this book.

It may be worth noting that even when I was writing the first edition of this book in 1984, I was able to send text files of extracts from the book for comment to some people by sending it via an acoustic modem that clipped to a standard telephone handpiece and that I stored a backup copy of the text on a mainframe computer via a communication service that was a forerunner of the Internet. I used packet switching to reduce the cost of a call from a tiny rural community in Western Australia to little more than a local call. This was 20 years ago.

Now I hardly wonder at being able to send sections of this book to experts across the world for their comments at negligible cost.

I am able in a home office to have some of the most powerful page layout

Chapter 10

Illustrations

A major part of most magazines

Pictures and line drawings form a major part of most magazines, unless you are restricted to the most basic of typewritten newsletters.

With a photocopied or small-offset magazine or newsletter, you can paste up line drawings that are the same size as the finished job — or which will be reduced by the same proportion as the rest of the material. Provided the original has good contrast, which is to say a sharp definition between black and white or red and white, it should reproduce well.

Red reproduces as black by most photographic processes, and light blue does not reproduce at all. This means that guide lines and marks can be printed, written or drawn in light blue, and you can color red anything you want to reproduce black, which comes in very useful if *you* need to see the information beneath to ensure it is exactly where it should be. Art supply shops still sell sheets of “Rubylith” or similar plastic material on which the thin red coating can be cut or scraped away to reveal the transparent base material.

Pencil drawings do not reproduce very well at all, unless you regard them in the same way as photographs, which will be dealt with later in this chapter.

You may be able to reproduce photos from newspapers as these are made up of quite coarse dots, but the finer screen of magazine photographs may present problems.

Sometimes there is enough contrast in a proper photograph to reproduce well even when the grey areas either drop out to white, or fill in to black. This is an effect used often in magazines, but has to be accepted on a trial-and-error basis — try the picture in an ordinary photocopier; if it looks reasonable, you will probably get a similar effect in printing.

Plates can make a difference

Some of the systems used by small offset printers work well in reproducing the fine detail of photographs and detailed line drawings. But some printers, in order to keep their costs to a minimum, use plates and platemaking equipment that cannot produce fine detail. Usually, if this is true, they also have problems in reproducing large solid areas, as with the larger sizes of heading types.

In many cases, the printer, if he does not have the equipment to make the better quality (and slightly more expensive plates) usually has an

Chapter 11

Layout and design

1: IN GENERAL

The object of layout

A look at any newsstand will show you a range of “arty” magazines, where layouts show signs of much thought and skill on the part of artist, photographer, graphic designers and editors. You will also notice that some of these layouts are not easy to read. To my mind this defeats the object of layout.

For the purposes of this book, we will deal with layout and design not as an art to be worthy of consideration and praise in itself. Instead, it will be regarded as a craft, to present the required text and illustrations to the reader in a way that encourages it to be seen and read.

At the same time, one must be aware of the time scale and cost involved in production. A “good” layout loses any right to that description if it does not lead the reader’s eye to each part in turn, or if it leaves a reader confused on what he should read next. It also loses all merit if it has taken so long in production that it has delayed the publication, or if it has added costs that are outside the budget for the publication.

Through this chapter I will be referring to a number of “rules of layout”. These should not be taken too literally. They are intended as guides for the person who wants to create a workmanlike job, every time, and in the minimum time. All the rules can be broken for a good idea, provided that idea works in the final analysis described above. And the only way to learn whether an idea will work or not is to try it. However, ideas can be tried in ways that will not destroy the overall effect of the publication if they fail.

Some of the major factors in deciding on the layout of a magazine are decided by a subject that comes in a later chapter — finance.

You will most probably have a set number of pages, or at least a limited range of page-number possibilities, and they will be of a certain size. You will also have a certain type of paper stock to print on, or maybe a particular stock for the cover, and another for the inside pages.

Chapter 12

A typical issue

1: MAGAZINE

Deciding content

You are the editor of a magazine for the Associated Collectors of Gumboots called *The Wellington*. It has a circulation to 2000 members, and a budget has been worked out that provides 20 pages plus a four-page cover that has advertisements on the inside-front, inside-back and back.

There is also a two-color full-page advert from the organizers of the annual exhibition on gumboots, using red as the second color.

The cover is printed first, includes a second color, and has to be with the printer two weeks before publication. The rest of the magazine has to be with the printer one week before publication.

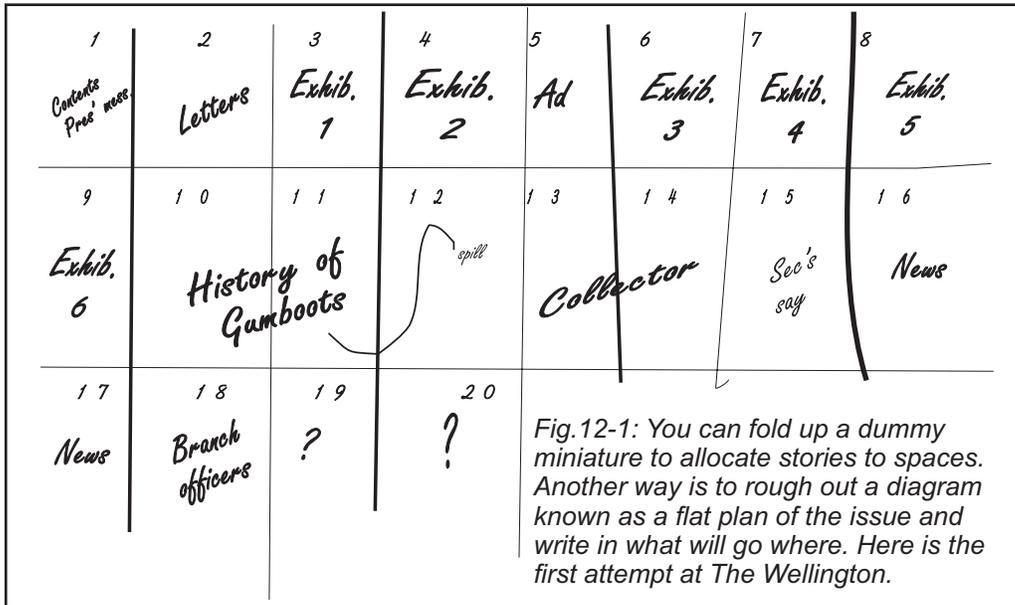
You have collected several special features — one on the history of gumboots, with illustrations from a number of books, and some photographs of examples in some private collections.

You also have an article on a collector, which will become the first of a regular series about members of the association. There is a preview of the annual exhibition with a map of the exhibits and details of what each exhibitor will have on show. There is a president's column, several letters, some news snippets from the secretary, and some press releases from firms that make gumboot stands, cleaner, and so forth. You also have to include a list of branch officers and addresses, and the aims and objects of the Associated Collectors of Gumboots.

Where things go

Pencil in features

On a rough dummy you pencil in the contents and president's message on page 1, the letters for page 2, and the exhibition preview can start on page 3, with the advert on 5 and so on, continuing through to page 9. The history of gumboots can spread across 10 and 11 and spill onto 12. The story on the collector can go on 13 and 14, and then the secretary's column on 15 (he'd like to be at the front, but a right-hand page will appease him),



then the news releases on 16 and 17, with the list of branch officers on page 18.

No good — two blank pages, so move everything from the secretary's column a further two pages on, and search out that story on preservation and storage that you didn't think you would use for a while, and allocate that to pages 15 and 16. The aims can be pencilled in at the bottom of page 12, mainly so you do not forget that it has to go somewhere.

As you move things around, you make a note of each that you delete to be sure that it goes back somewhere.

What pages print together

Now you check with the printer and find that he will print the 20 pages inside as a 16-page section, printed as two runs of eight pages, and a four page section inside that, which he will "work and turn" so that it is only one run.

That means that pages 9, 10, 11, 12 will be one run, and there will be two other runs comprising:

1, 4, 5, 8, 13, 16, 17, 20 and:

2, 3, 6, 7, 14, 15, 18, 19.

Fold a sheet of paper into half, quarters and eighths, and then number where each page falls. Open it out and you will see how the page numbers as above fall on opposite sides of the sheet.

This means that if you have the advertisement with the second color on

Chapter 13

Paste-up

Old ways still used

Pasting up is no longer common outside playgroups and elementary schools. Most publishers produce complete pages, output to PDF files in readiness for creating film or going direct to the press, and printing to laser printers is usually just for proofing. However paste-up *does* still exist and *is* sometimes very useful particularly to the small newsletter or “zine” publisher who works by printing out page masters on a laser printer then photocopying them. It is a way of making alterations to pages which have been output already or where there are problems in getting a file to output as a whole.

It is also useful for introducing features ranging from pasting in drawings or copied line art, rather than scanning them and placing them on the page in the computer. Another use is creating special effects: there are some things you can do very simply in paste up, such as a shattered effect where you slice up an illustration, or line of type, and paste it down with each slice slightly out of alignment. This can be done with expensive software that takes time to learn, or very simply with a knife and a steel rule.

Therefore, while this section gets smaller with each edition of this book it remains useful for some while also being an introduction of concepts which are the basis for the front end of DTP programs. And, though it tends to be used for a number of “zines” (along with hand drawn headings), may be too uncommon and archaic to survive beyond this edition.

A drafting board or table with a T-square is more than adequate for getting everything squared up correctly, especially if you are producing modular sections. You can draw guidelines in light blue and even get layout sheets printed with columns and page areas marked in light blue. You will also need at least one type gauge or rule, preferably one long and one short, and one of these should be metal to use as a cutting guide.

On the ‘stone’ or light table

The make-up bench

The make-up bench is usually called the “stone” because in the earliest days of printing that is what it was made of. Later it was made of sheet metal but now that only paper has to be supported, they can be of much lighter construction. A small bench of translucent glass or plastic with

Chapter 14

Using the software

A brief guide

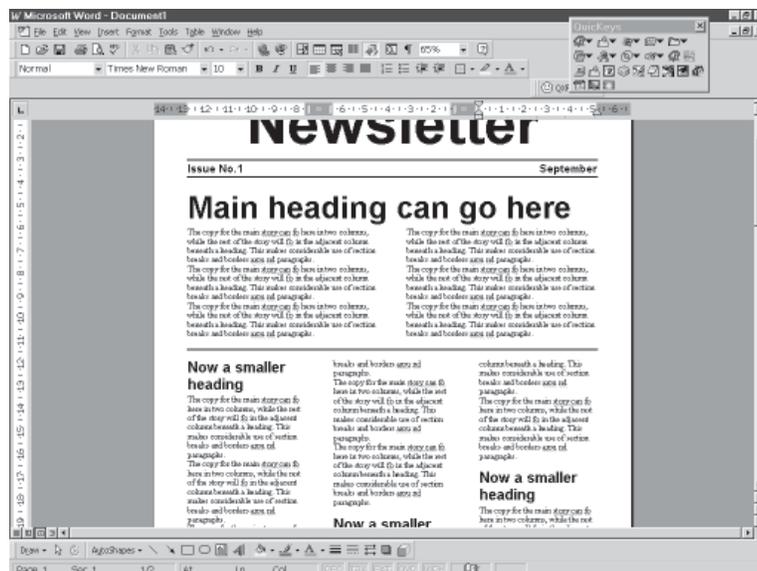
This chapter will look at production of a publication using some specific computer applications. However it is not intended to be a manual in the use of these programs, rather a brief guide to how they and similar programs work so that you can perhaps decide which to use and know what to look for in training.

To start, we will consider a newsletter produced on a no-frills personal computer, such as may be found in many homes as well as offices and using software that is probably already installed.

This will be the kind of equipment readily available to most clubs without requiring the purchase of special equipment. In this section I will use the most common of word processing programs, Microsoft Word, which is available for PCs and the Apple Macintosh computer.

Secondly, we will move up to some of the programs capable of producing a professional-looking publication, requiring some specialised equipment and specialised programs. In this category you would be involved in expenditure of several thousand dollars. Lastly, we will take a brief look at the kind of equipment you would need to produce a full-scale

Fig. 14-1: A simple newsletter can be produced quite easily in Microsoft Word, or most word processors by using section breaks every time there is a change in the number of columns, such as for a heading across multiple columns.



Chapter 15

The e-zine

A presence on the Web

Many publications now exist only on the World Wide Web of the Internet. However, that is not our subject here. What we shall be covering is the web page or rather series of pages which give an electronic presence to a print publication.

This in itself can take many forms.

With a simple newsletter, it can be a decision to produce an exact copy of the print edition using HTML, the web formatting language which produces 99 per cent of the web pages you see. Microsoft Word can do this, but is often criticized for producing excessively complex HTML code. However the choices of type and heading sizes for a simple newsletter are usually fairly limited and there are few complex illustrations, so this can work quite well regardless.

It may be necessary to make some changes to the layout before converting to the format needed for the web — such as changing from multiple columns to a single column format.

To put your “print” newsletter, zine or magazine on the web, exactly as is, the answer is a screen definition PDF which can be downloaded for reading offline with the free Adobe Reader software or viewed on screen provided they have a PDF plug-in installed for their browser software.

In preparing a PDF be aware that there is a big difference in the specifications for on screen use compared with a file which is to be printed. This has little effect on the type but involves mainly the resolution of the graphics — those intended for screen viewing only can be considerably coarser than those for print, dramatically reducing file size.

The whole or part

There are still discussions as to whether it is better to provide the full text of publications on line or to provide an easy means of downloading the whole.

In some cases an answer may be to provide a summary in a form which can be browsed on line and the full text of either the whole or of sections, to be downloaded.

You have to make similar decisions with a publication produced using

Chapter 16

Economics

Ways to get an income

As we mentioned in our chapter on advertisements, the income for a magazine or newsletter can be from either advertisements or copy sales or from both. Some publications derive their entire income from advertisements and are given away free, either generally or to a very specific market. The latter are known as “controlled circulation” publications; they may be free but you have to fulfill certain conditions to receive them — in other words you have to be a potential customer for the advertisers.

The result of a general dependence on advertisements means that publications which do not take ads will seem very expensive in comparison, even though they do not have to print the extra pages on which those ads would appear.

This has changed a little with the acceptance of higher prices for specialised hobby magazines.

Fixed and variable costs

Two selling prices

In most products, there is a fixed cost (all the general overheads and costs leading to the first production item) and a variable cost (the cost of producing the quantity required). The total of these, divided by the quantity produced gives the cost per item, and then you add the profit needed and arrive at a selling price.

With a magazine, you have two selling prices, the cover price of the magazine and the price of advertisements, and a change to the price of the advertisements could change their quantity and relative proportion (the number of double-page spreads or eighth pages for example), both of which can change the bulk of the publication and therefore affect the overall cost of production. This large number of variables can cause headaches in costing.

In fact, I suggest that the computer program you need more than any of the others mentioned in this book is your spreadsheet program.

You are producing a product with more variables than almost any other so you need to get them under control. There are many good books available on how to start a small business, so this chapter will deal only with aspects that are peculiar to publications.

Chapter 17

Distribution

Post is one way

For our original newsletter of a small club with all local members, you may decide that the best distribution is for one volunteer or several to deliver copies by hand to individual houses or businesses. But it is more likely that you will make use of the postal service.

A reduced postage rate is given for publications, provided the publisher meets certain conditions such as sorting the mailing into postcode or zip code order. However, changing regulations make this less attractive than it was for very small-circulation journals in some places.

Apply to the main post office in your nearest major city for the current requirements. They are not particularly onerous, requiring mainly a substantial editorial content, that the name and publication date appear in certain positions, and that the registration details are included on the front cover. You will usually be required to produce one or two specimen issues, which means that registration cannot be obtained before a first issue, although a mock-up of a new publication may be acceptable.

You will also have to sign a declaration that your production is not to be a part-work, a catalog, directory or price list, and that it will be produced within the country of registration. There is an annual registration fee and a typical requirement is that it contain at least 25 per cent news and information “of a general kind”.

Taxation on publications

The proportion of news and information carried may also affect another item of costing — tax. In many countries publications are free of sales or value-added tax (VAT, GST, etc.) provided they carry a proportion of editorial content, usually at least 10 per cent. However, as tax and postage regulations are subject to change, you would be well advised to obtain up-to-date information from the appropriate government office.

With the introduction of the goods and services tax or value added tax in many countries, the freedom from sales taxes for newspapers and magazines has generally ended, but you should still check whether there are any concessions for publications which are not predominantly advertisements.

Chapter 18

The legal side

Laws are different

This chapter will not attempt to detail exactly what can and cannot be said legally in print. It is a most complex field, especially since even within a single country the law may differ in each state.

Libel

There are chapters on libel in virtually every book on journalism and I refer you to those for general explanations. However, for most purposes the rule of thumb is to ask yourself whether any doubtful statement will bring a person into disrepute or cast any slur on the person's character. You don't need to ask whether the statement is true, for it can be true and still be libelous.

Criticise the action, not the actor

In general it is safe to criticise the action but not the actor and to be moderate in your choice of words. While one may fairly criticise, for example, a performance of a play, it would be defamatory to infer or state that one of the cast does not know how to act. Similarly to cast doubt on anyone's ability in their employment is to possibly bring down that person in the eyes of others and so could be actionable.

Privilege, which is the right to report accurately otherwise libelous material said at certain meetings, usually extends to reports of parliaments, courts, official inquiries and so on, and may extend in some jurisdictions down to local government authorities. However this is conditional on the reports being fair and accurate — you cannot just pick out one side and report that as if it was all that was said. However such laws vary widely and may require that the report be published contemporaneously, which would usually be taken to mean in the next available issue of a monthly magazine or within a week or maybe two for a weekly publication. The same privilege would not cover a report printed many months later and you would then have to rely on the normal laws of libel and the possible defence of public interest.

In editorial comment the same principle is likely to apply as with letters, mentioned later, and a person who feels aggrieved can sue the writer, editor and publisher together or separately.

Obscenity and indecency are also covered by laws which vary widely

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