

Five tips to run your magazine on time

Roslyn Atkinson



If you're in charge of your association magazine or newsletter, chances are you know the feeling of panic when you're running behind schedule.

Maybe you've been scrambling for last-minute articles, or awaiting approval from a fastidious CEO, or perhaps your graphic designer has caught the flu. Sometimes delays are unavoidable, but you can reduce your blood pressure – and even have fun putting the magazine together – by following these five simple tips.

1 Create a draft topic list for future editions

If your filing system for story ideas consists of a pile of papers in your in-tray, you might feel a bit frantic when it comes to preparing content for your association magazine. A forward features list will give you a headstart.

2 Create a flatplan

Map out the whole magazine by using a simple tool called a flatplan. This helps you see all the pages of the magazine at a glance and is an easy way to see how many stories you need.

3 Work out how many words fit on a page

When planning your association magazine, an old adage rings true: "You can't manage what you can't measure." The simple knowledge of how many words fit to a page can make all the difference when you're chasing or editing stories.

4 Have a few stories up your sleeve

Occasionally you might edit an article that doesn't fit into the magazine, or you might come across some story ideas that are relevant for your members but aren't time sensitive. Keep these in a special file to use in case of emergency.

5 Have a realistic production schedule

Printing and mailing usually takes two to three weeks. Build this time into your planning and you won't be anxious when your boss asks 'why is the printing taking so long?' You can save yourself time and hassle by outsourcing your publications to experts, who are experienced in working with member-based organisations and can ensure your publications are top quality.

Roslyn Atkinson is editor at Mahlab Media and can be contacted on (02) 9818 8896 or by email at roslyn@mahlabmedia.com.au