

CHAPTER 18

PUBLICATIONS

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1 INTRODUCTION

Magazines and newsletters have often been the focal rallying call for social change movements. They are central to the advancement of a movement; mobilising supporters around key actions and developing an understanding of both the movement's key issues and the work of the individual organisation.

At a practical level, a magazine or newsletter also has to be cost effective and be of use as a fundraising and supporter development tool.

Writing a society magazine or newsletter is not a simple task. These publications have to 'talk to' different audiences and put across different messages. An accessible standard style is needed, notwithstanding what could be a variety of contributors with widely different agendas and approaches. This requires careful planning, strong style guidance and firm editorial management.

Before embarking on a publication, the following questions should be answered:

- 1. Who do you want the publication to reach?**
- 2. How many pages will it have?**
- 3. How often will it be produced?**
- 4. How will it get to the audience?**
- 5. What style/tone will it have?**
- 6. What size will it be?**

The following sections will assist you in answering these questions.

2 TYPES OF PUBLICATIONS

Magazines and newsletters are the organisation's 'shop windows' to the world, together with the website. This means that they need to appear professional and interesting, to involve and attract support to your cause.

In general, a magazine is a more substantial publication, whereas a newsletter is a less formal and less substantial method of updating audiences about the organisation's work or progress, including news on individual issues or campaigns. Leaflets are prepared for a specific purpose, such as a given campaign or to introduce the organisation.

A magazine is usually published periodically for example twice-yearly or quarterly, whereas newsletters can be published more frequently, whenever there is news to report. Magazines and newsletters are a regular and general means of communication.

Whether an organisation uses magazines, newsletters or both will depend on a number of factors, including available finances. Similarly, the frequency of magazines and newsletters will depend on money and time available. Larger organisations tend to have regular magazines (quarterly or six-monthly) plus newsletters such as campaign updates or supporter newsletters. However, some smaller organisations with less funding often use newsletters instead of magazines to meet many of the same purposes, at a lower cost.



AUDIENCE

3

A society needs to know who its audience is, to ensure that it is reaching and 'speaking to' its audience in an appropriate way. Often, supporters and potential supporters are the main audience. However, a magazine or newsletter could also be used to reach other audiences, including:

- Politicians
- Corporate companies
- The media
- Other animal protection societies
- Opponents.



Due to the potentially wide range of people reading the publication, it is important that the publication is authoritative, accurate and highlights the issues as well as the current work of the society.

Questionnaires are a good way to get to know your audience. They can help you find out which aspects of your magazine are most popular with subscribers. Over time, the format and content of your magazine can be amended to make it more popular to your majority audience(s).

Questionnaires can also reveal interesting and unexpected facts; for instance, that readers want to know how they can help on particular issues. Therefore opportunities to donate, or protest, or how to buy cruelty free products should be included.

PRODUCTION

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Organising the society's magazine is a big job and should not be underestimated. The routine administration is sometimes delegated, but an experienced editor or editorial panel usually organises the overall plan and edits articles carefully. This section aims to give an overview of some of the factors that need to be considered at the production stage.

a) Schedule

A schedule has to be agreed with the printer and designer, to ensure that the magazine can be sent out at the planned time. A timetable needs to be drawn up which details when various tasks will need to be completed, to ensure that the magazine is produced by a specific date. It is usually best to work back from the due date. If you are producing your publications in-house it is still best to set a schedule and to keep to it.

Key stages in the process include:

- Brainstorming ideas for content
- Drafting content and sourcing pictures
- Editing submitted content and pictures
- Design layout of content and pictures
- Final editing
- Proofreading
- Printing.

b) Template and Style

A template for the contents of the magazine is a good way to maintain control over the length and format. It is easier to manage a magazine that has a coherent plan, and it usually results in a better quality publication.



It is also preferable to have style rules for a magazine, to ensure a coherent and recognisable style and branding.

c) Content

Examples of typical parts of a magazine include:

- Regular letters page
- Regular reviews
- Regular events calendar
- Editorial
- News pages
- Features pages.

Example of a contents list for a 20-page magazine:

1. Four pages of news. Each page to contain an 'in brief' column of four snippet stories and have one large news story and picture
2. A two page project-orientated feature
3. A one-page 'day in the life' article, written in the first person, which could relate to the feature
4. A two-page fundraising-orientated feature and a spread with a 'viewpoint' and 'animal fact file'
5. In the centre of the magazine, a two-page feature on the priority campaign/issue
6. A one-page celebrity interview, in a different tone and style. This would be on the same spread as a one-page 'profile' type piece and could be about an individual, an organisation or a country
7. The reader would then turn to a page on 'animal friendly' living and book reviews before going on to an events calendar and letters page
8. The back cover contains details of how to contact the organisation.

An important part of the preparation for the magazine is collecting and recording information on an ongoing basis. It is easy to keep a 'magazine box', in which to put copies of all interesting information or developments. This will save an enormous amount of time when the magazine is due and help to ensure a rich content.

d) Images

Choosing the right images for articles is an important part of the magazine preparation. Often images can have a greater impact than words. However, many supporters will complain if there are too many gruesome and horrifying images in one edition. Supporters can feel manipulated, if only gruesome images are shown.

Action pictures that show the organisation's work are very important. If supporters can see that 'their' organisation is actively tackling the problems, they feel more secure and appreciate that their support is worthwhile.

5

SOME COST CONSIDERATIONS

It is always difficult to judge how much money an organisation should spend on its magazine. This cannot be measured solely by the size of donations that come in from an accompanying appeal. As stated earlier, the magazine is the main 'shop window' to the organisation, and it helps to build supporter loyalty and understanding. Some of the value of a magazine will be in less tangible forms, such as changing attitudes and lifestyles, whereas some will be concrete: longer term values, such as generating future legacies.

Advertising: Many organisations decide to include paid advertising in order to make their magazines less costly. This can certainly help financially, but it should not be undertaken lightly.

Firstly, advertising should always be ethical (if possible connected to the organisation's remit – cruelty free goods or ethical investments for example) – even some pet food companies test on animals. Secondly, the balance of the magazine has to be maintained. It is first and foremost the society's magazine; it is the organisation's own 'shop window' and as such, it should feature issues relevant to its mission. It is completely counter-productive to allow it to be overtaken by advertising, becoming more like a marketing catalogue.

Printing costs: The number of copies printed has an effect on cost. Publications may be destined for a small circulation because they are only of interest to a minority of people. The difficulty lies in finding a way to cater for that demand at an affordable price.

For example, to print 500 copies in the UK of a 48-page report might cost in the region of £1,350; a thousand copies would cost £1,590. Most of the cost of printing – the administration, filmsetting, plate-making and setting-up – is 'fixed'. It remains the same, regardless of how many copies are produced.

But printing costs need not be prohibitive. Costs can be brought down by a variety of means, including photocopying, digital colour printing and publishing on the internet.

Photocopying on a machine in good condition can produce very satisfactory results, and a simple way to achieve even better quality is to improve the weight and texture of the paper. Remember that it may be a better use of your resources to have attractive pages cheaply printed than mediocre pages expensively printed.

If you have an A3 photocopier you could print the pages yourself in the correct imposition, using laser proofs as originals. In this case, you would only need to have a 'proper' cover printed (perhaps in one colour) and the booklet stapled ('saddle-stitched').

Digital colour printing: For a more ambitious document you could consider using one of the new digital colour technologies. Digital colour printing is a four-colour process similar to full-colour litho. One advantage of digital printing, even at less economic quantities, is the rapid turnaround: 48 hours or less.

Publishing on the internet: An even more radical way to escape the trap of fixed printing costs is to eliminate print altogether by publishing your documents on the internet. You could still have them designed to a high standard, but your designer would convert them to 'Portable Document Format' (PDF). Anyone who wanted to read a paper copy could print it out on his or her own printer, anywhere in the world, in exactly the same designed format.

However, it may be difficult to extract any revenue from this, so the overall profit and loss situation could be unfavourable. Also your readers would have to get a free copy of Acrobat Reader if they don't already have it from the Adobe website. You would also have to monitor the use of this facility very carefully to make sure you were succeeding in getting your message across.



6 FURTHER RESOURCES

Magazines

The following are some good examples of successful animal protection society magazines. It is well worth obtaining copies to study the format and content.



All Animals

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)

Tel: + 1 (202) 452 1100

E-mail: membership@hsus.org

Website: www.hsus.org/press_and_publications/humane_society_magazines_and_newsletters/all_animals/

HSUS's quarterly membership magazine – in full colour and informative – co-produced by HSUS and Time, Inc.

Animals International

WSPA

Tel: + 44 (20) 7587 5000

E-mail: wspa@wspa.org.uk

Website: www.wspa.org.uk/index.php?page=911

WSPA's bi-annual magazine

AWI Quarterly

Animal Welfare Institute, USA

Tel: + 1 (202) 337 2332

E-mail: awi@awionline.org

Website: www.awionline.org/pubs/quarterly.html

AWI's quarterly magazine – full of very useful information



Campaign Report

The British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV)

Tel: +44 (0) 207 700 4888

E-mail: info@buav.org

The BUAV's quarterly magazine – well thought-out sections and good design