

Issue Planning Chart

Instructions for Use

Issue Planning Chart

Use this chart after the planning meeting. When you have some good article ideas and they have been refined, you will need to see how they fit into your plans for your magazine. Your chart will be based on the content of your magazine.

Sample chart

The issue planning chart shown is for a magazine with five feature articles and four regular departments. There is an informal chart for the feature articles. In each issue, the editors try to have an article on prayer, one on evangelism or missions, one on growth, and an interview. These are not labeled as departments in the magazine. The informal chart just helps the editors maintain balance.

Things to Consider

Consider these as you work your editorial plan using the Issue Planning Chart:

1. Balance it vertically

See if there are any repeated topics in any given issue. For example, in the sample chart, the March/April issue has two articles on lying, and the July/August issue has three articles related to money (“Joy of giving,” “Spouses disagree on \$,” and “Teaching stewardship”). Unless the articles are to comprise a special topical issue, the editor should switch two of these to other issues to avoid repetition.

Make sure there is a variety of styles and tones in each issue. In other words, is there a good mixture of approaches (first-person, how-to, Bible teaching)? Is there a good balance of “heavy,” convicting articles and encouraging articles? You might want to add symbols to your chart to signal what approaches the articles take.

2. Balance it horizontally

Are you giving readers enough variety? For example, in the family department, March/April and May/June both have child-related articles. You might switch one of them with another article for more balance of child and adult-related themes.

3. Consider the seasons

Do you want to include holiday-related articles, for example, Christmas- or Easter-related themes?

Are there seasons that are more appropriate for some articles? For example, an article on depression might be most relevant during the winter months, or an article on missions trips during the months when people would be making their vacation plans.

SAMPLE ISSUE PLANNING CHART

	JAN/FEB	MARCH/APRIL	MAY/JUNE	JULY/AUG
FEATURE ARTICLES				
1. PRAYER	Mind wanders when praying	Praying when in crisis	Praying the Scriptures	Confession
2. EVANGELISM OR MISSIONS	Sharing your faith at work	When Mormons come knocking	Partnering with a missionary	Fears in witnessing
3. INTERVIEWS	Interview with Brennan Manning	Interview with Christian TV reporter	Interview with Bill Bright	Interview with a non-Christian teen
4. GROWTH/ CHARACTER	Humility: Key to growth	Is it ever okay to lie?	Are you teachable?	Journey to contentment
5. VARIOUS	Overseas believers' views of U.S. church	Are you a safe person?	Persecuted Believers—what to do	Joy of giving
DEPARTMENTS				
FAMILY LIFE	Is it okay to date?	When your child lies	Teach kids to pray	Spouses disagree on \$
INTO THE SCRIPTURES	Character study	Studying Psalms	Bible study tools	Word study
CLASSICS	Teresa of Avila	Jon Edwards	Aquinas	Susanna Wesley
DISCIPLING	Teaching quiet time	When your disciple sins	Finding a disciple	Teaching stewardship