INTRODUCTION TO MAGAZINE EDITING

LAUNCH AND PUBLISH A SUCCESSFUL CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE

Edited by Sharon Mumper

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Authors and contributors
Susan Maycinik Nikaido, Marian V. Liautaud, Carla Foote

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Introduction to Magazine Editing

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Magazine Training International (MTI) is a nonprofit organization which provides training and resources to Christians in magazine publishing in less-resourced areas of the world. You may contact MTI through our website at www.magazinetraining.com.

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FOREWORD

This book is based on seven newly revised, expanded, and rewritten chapters from "The Editing the Magazine" manual. The original 12-chapter manual is used in connection with courses taught by Magazine Training International (MTI) around the world.

This book is a subset of three separate publishing topics which together form "Introduction to Magazine Publishing," a textbook developed to be used in conjunction with a course that has been taught onsite in Africa and is now available as an online course.

MTI's mission is to provide training resources to Christians in publishing in less-resourced areas of the world as they seek to build the church and reach their societies for Christ. Our purpose is to strengthen and support the Christian magazine publishing industry in as many countries as possible.

MTI organized more than 70 workshops and conferences onsite in some two dozen countries between 1989 and 2023, and began offering courses on magazine writing, editing, business, and design in 1997. MTI began offering online courses and workshops in 2013, and since then has offered more than 20 online courses and more than 60 online workshops.

"The Business of Magazine Publishing," "Editing the Magazine," and "Design for Magazines" course manuals are available in a variety of languages, including Chinese, Spanish, Croatian, Russian, Malayalam, Romanian, Korean, Bulgarian, French, and English. None of the manuals is available in all the languages.

The "Introduction to Magazine Publishing" book is available in English and French.

MTI offers online courses and workshops and offers more than 100 print and video resources for publishers on an information-packed website at https://www.magazinetraining.com.

EDITING FOR MAGAZINES

Editors are the heart behind the magazine. They are visionaries who know and love the audience and dream of what the end product could look like and how it will lead readers to Jesus Christ. The editor leaves a unique signature on the magazine. Her beliefs, priorities, creativity, and commitment to excellence are reflected on every page.

What makes a magazine editor effective? He loves and appreciates magazines as a medium of communication. He respects the desires and needs of readers and is kind and helpful toward writers.

The editor is committed to accuracy and detail. He is factually accurate, checking every source and statistic. And he is biblically truthful, checking Scripture quotations and making sure Scripture is used properly.

The editor is familiar with the language and knows how it works. She is curious, always exploring and learning.

Is a Christian editor different from any other editor? The Christian editor is committed to excellence, truth, kindness, servanthood, and humility. He helps his staff and writers to develop and grow, and keeps his focus on serving readers, rather than on his own personal gain. She is fair in news reporting, not letting personal bias influence the way she reports the news. In short, the Christian editor's goal is to glorify God by producing the best magazine possible to minister truth with compassion and skill to the chosen audience.

1 THE MAGAZINE PROFILE

IN THIS CHAPTER:

IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

WRITE A READER PROFILE

WRITE A MISSION STATEMENT

WRITE A VALUES STATEMENT

EXAMINE YOUR MARKET POSITION

DEVELOP AN EDITORIAL PLAN

DECIDE ON FORMAT AND DESIGN

DEVELOP A PRODUCT MANUAL

What makes your magazine different from any other magazine? Your magazine should have its own personality—its own profile. The more clearly defined your magazine's profile, the more effectively it will do its job. How do you define your magazine's profile? First, you must identify your target audience and develop a mission statement. Only then do you have the necessary information to define your editorial plan.

IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

Why identify a target audience?

Why do you have to identify the particular type of reader you want to reach? Why can't your magazine be for everyone? A magazine is personal; the reader needs to have the impression: "This magazine is for me." In fact, if you try to reach everyone, you will not reach anyone. That means no one will immediately identify with your magazine. People outside your target audience may read your magazine, but the

magazine needs to be tailored for a specific audience. Most important, you need to know who you want to reach in order to reach them effectively.

How do you identify your target audience?
Your target audience must have broad enough appeal to support a magazine financially, but narrow enough focus for readers to identify with it personally. In order to decide who your audience is, ask yourself what group of people you want to reach. These may be people with a certain special interest. (For example, church history or raising children.) Or, your audience may be defined by age, gender, level of spiritual interest, etc.

Consider whether you are qualified to reach these people. If there is no one on my staff in this group, can you find people in that audience who will give input and feedback? The size of your market is also important. Find out whether it is a large enough group to provide the necessary circulation size to support the magazine and ask whether they can afford to buy the kind of magazine you would like to produce.

Another important question is whether you can stay committed to this group long-term.

WRITE A READER PROFILE

Who are the people who comprise your target audience? In order to create a magazine that will attract and effectively serve them, you need to know your audience. It is useful to write a reader profile that includes the following elements.

1. A demographic description of your readers, including:

• Marital status/family • Age • Education • Gender • Church and ministry involvement • Lifestyle • Work/occupation • Interests • Economic class/salaries • Ethnicity

2. An experiential and emotional description of your reader's life, answering these questions:

• What are this person's priorities? • How does he feel about life?
• What issues interest the reader? • What are the challenges in her

life? • What is the reader's relationship with God like? • What are his spiritual practices? Daily Bible reading? Prayer? • Who is important to her? • Why does he need a magazine? • What questions would the reader have about subjects you will cover in your magazine?

WRITE A MISSION STATEMENT

A mission statement is a short statement that describes the goal of your magazine.

Why do you need a mission statement?
The saying is true: "He who aims at nothing will hit it every time." Publishing a magazine is like going on a long journey. If you don't know where you're going, you will simply wander around without reaching a destination. The mission statement is your destination.

The mission statement will help you stay on target long-term, so that you don't drift off onto "side roads." It gives you a clear picture of the magazine you will publish, and it helps you decide which articles are appropriate for your magazine. A carefully designed mission statement will help you in evaluating your publication to see whether you are on-target, or whether you need to adjust either your aim or the mission statement.

What is in a mission statement?
The mission statement is a description of what the magazine will do. In order to show this, the mission statement will use action words such as: encourage; inform; motivate; inspire; challenge; promote; help; and equip. The mission statement also describes the target audience. For example, your mission statement might say the magazine is for: "*Christian women*," or "*Lutherans*," or "*parents of young children*," or "*church lay leaders*." Lastly, the mission statement describes what you hope to achieve in the readers' lives. For example, you may say you want your readers to: "*Share the Gospel more effectively*," or "*to be able to disciple their children*," or "*to understand how God is at work in our denomination*."

Examples of mission statements
Here are some examples of mission statements for magazines with varying audiences and goals.

Interlit: To serve Christian publishing professionals around the world with current and critical industry news and information.

World: To report and analyze the news on a weekly schedule in an interesting, accurate, and arresting fashion, and to combine reporting with a practical commentary on current events and issues from a perspective committed to the Bible as the inerrant Word of God.

Alliance Life: To teach and inspire readers concerning principles of Christian living and to inform them of the advance of the Gospel in North America and overseas.

How to write a mission statement

Gather your whole staff—editors, designers, and business people. Your whole staff needs to prayerfully agree on the purpose of the magazine.

Have the staff brainstorm answers to the following questions. Write their answers on a whiteboard or flip chart. Ask: What do we want this magazine to accomplish? What should be the end result in the readers' lives? (You might want to provide a list of action words.) Who is the *primary* reader of this magazine? Who is it designed to help?

Narrow your answers, making them more specific. Consider how much your magazine really can accomplish and what your staff has the expertise and the resources to accomplish.

Select one to three goals you agree are most important for your magazine to accomplish and decide on the specific audience you are most motivated and best equipped to reach.

The editor should write a rough draft of the statement using the ideas from the staff and the editor's own vision for the magazine. (It is usually difficult and time-consuming to write by committee.) Then, call the staff together to fine-tune the mission statement. (Pass out copies of your draft in advance.) Ask the staff for their suggestions and feedback, and then write a final draft of the mission statement.

Take a look at the mission statement annually

Ask whether the mission statement still reflects our goals for the magazine, and whether there is anything we want to add or adjust. Evaluate how well the articles we published last year fulfilled our mission.

WRITE A VALUES STATEMENT

Your values define what you and your staff believe and value about your magazine, its mission, and the way you go about the business of editing a magazine. Your values are unchanging principles upon which you base your work. Your values statement may include statements regarding the foundation on which your publication is based—why you are publishing and what you want to accomplish.

The values statement will consider the reader—your approach to and attitude toward the reader and how you will value and handle the reader. The values statement will also address the content of the magazine—the quality you will pursue and the basis on which you will make decisions concerning fairness, balance, theological content, etc.

Your method of operation will also come under the microscope, examining how you will deal with staff, authors, and vendors in regard to standards, work ethics, relationships, and financial principles.

EXAMINE YOUR MARKET POSITION

Your magazine is probably only one of many magazines serving the people in your region. Why should your potential readers buy your magazine in addition to, or instead of, another one? What makes your magazine unique? In order to understand how to build on the strengths that make your magazine unique and desirable, it is important to see how your magazine stands in relation to others in the market, both Christian and secular.

Describe your competitors

Describe the other magazines in your market, both Christian and secular. Take into account these factors:

• Format • Circulation/digital distribution • Number of pages • Price • Staff • Quality of printing • Readers • Cover design • Quality of paper • Content • Overall design • Departments and features

Write a position statement

Write a statement describing how your publication is unique and fills a niche in the market which is not occupied by any other magazine.

Clarify how your magazine is different from others. State your position without downgrading the other magazines. Simply write about what is positive about your publication.

DEVELOP AN EDITORIAL PLAN

Before you begin, review the profile of your target reader and your mission statement. You may also want to look at other magazines, both Christian and secular, that are popular with your target audience.

Decide on the writing style

What style of writing is appropriate for your readers? A magazine for scholars will use an academic style, while a magazine for teenagers may use a contemporary, slangy style. The writing style you choose is important.

Style has to do with the choice of words and tone of the writing. It may be warm and friendly, formal, academic, business-like, chatty, contemporary, etc. It includes decisions on length and grammatical complexity of sentences and length of paragraphs. You will also want to deal with the number of and types of examples used in describing principles.

Select the types of articles you will use

These are some of the types of articles you might consider: News/news features; first-person articles; how-to articles; Scripture exposition; church history; personality profiles; interviews (question and answer articles); and fiction or poetry.

As you consider what types of articles to use, ask yourself: Would this type of article fulfill our mission? Do we have or could we find the resources to provide this kind of article? Would this type of article interest my target reader?

Plan regular features and columns

A regular feature is a short feature (usually one or two pages) that appears in every issue. A column is an opinion article or essay, usually written by the same person in each issue. Regular features and columns can be read quickly. Since they appear in each issue, they give the reader something familiar to look forward to. They help establish

the personality of the magazine and they often provide a personal link with the reader.

Brainstorm possible regular features and columns. Here are some types of features and columns: Q&A (question and answer); humor/cartoons; infographics; opinion/essay; personality profile; book reviews; editor's column; page of practical tips; news of the denomination; news of the Christian world; and letters to the editor.

Look at each of these categories and ask yourself: Would this type of feature fulfill our mission? Do we have or could we find the resources to provide this kind of feature? Would this type of feature interest my target reader?

DECIDE ON FORMAT AND DESIGN

Decide the format

For print:
Elements to consider include the physical dimensions of the magazine (size), the number of pages, the paper quality, the desired frequency of publication, and whether to have advertising, and if so how much.

Questions to ask yourself include: What format is popular with my target audience? What format best fits my budget? Consider mailing costs as well as production costs. These decisions will be made together with your business and production staff.

For digital:
Elements to consider include which publishing platforms (iPad, Kindle, mobile, desktop) you will use, the number of editorial pieces in each digital issue, the frequency you will publish, and whether to have advertising, and if so how much.

How to decide? Ask yourself: What format is popular with my target audience? What format best fits my budget? Be sure to consider additional design cost for distributing digital magazines in multiple formats.

Plan the design of the magazine
Design is another way you can communicate to your target audience, "This magazine is for you." Your design will be determined by your

target audience and your mission. The design should reflect the purpose of the magazine and it should appeal to your target audience.

Refine the design, including the designer in discussions about the look of the magazine. Ask the designer to provide a prototype of the design, including cover, regular features and departments, and a sample feature article. Work with the designer until you are both satisfied.

DEVELOP A PRODUCT MANUAL

It is not essential to develop a product manual, but it may be helpful to produce a manual to which all staff members contribute. It also helps to acquaint new staff members with the magazine.

Typical elements of a product manual

• Publisher's and/or editor's note • Publication history • Name and logo • Mission statement • Publication values • Editorial goals (objectives) • Product positioning • Reader profile • Editorial plan • Design guidelines • Advertising guidelines • Circulation policies • Fulfillment policies • Financial goals

YOUR TURN

1. Write a mission statement for your magazine.
Remember to include:

• The target audience

• What the publication will do for the target audience

• The expected outcome of reading your publication

2. Write a list of values for your publication
Answer the following questions:

• What is the foundation on which your publication is based?

• How will you value and handle your reader?

• What will you value in the magazine's content?

• What will the staff value in the way the publication is operated?

3. Write a list of goals for your publication
• What specifically does your magazine want to communicate?

• What are your circulation goals?

• If you publish a digital magazine, what kind of traffic are you looking for? How many pageviews, unique visitors, and new subscribers are you looking for?

• What are your financial goals?

• How will you evaluate success?

2 EDITORIAL PLANNING

IN THIS CHAPTER:

A well-crafted magazine full of appealing and interesting articles doesn't just "happen." It is the result of careful and consistent planning. Editorial planning ensures a continual stream of fresh, significant article ideas. It promotes balance in the magazine, since with forethought you can plan a rich variety of articles that will interest your readers. And, if you plan far enough in advance, you will have the time you need to produce the kinds of articles that take more time, such as articles requiring interviews or extensive research. As an added benefit, your whole editorial team will have peace of mind, and the chaos of pulling a magazine together at the last minute will be just an unpleasant memory.

THE EDITORIAL PLANNING MEETING

Good editorial planning begins with an editorial planning meeting involving the whole editorial staff. Ideally, you should meet once or twice a year for a long-term planning meeting. Shorter meetings to

bring everyone up to date on upcoming issues may be more frequent.

Be sure to schedule your planning meetings for a time when everyone can attend and when there are no immediate deadlines to distract the team. Plan to meet for at least half a day and consider including a meal. You may talk about other editorial and business matters at this time, but be sure to leave lots of time for brainstorming.

Prepare for a successful meeting
Give your staff plenty of advance notice—at least one month. Ask your staff to prepare for the meeting. You may give them a list of questions to answer. Or, have them ask questions of people they know who are similar to your readers. *(See the sample article planning sheet at the end of this chapter. You can adapt these questions to the kind of articles you're looking for.)*

Try to get away from the office. If you can, hold your planning meeting in a conference room in a hotel, meet in someone's home, a local church, or even go to a park. This is important because it gets everyone away from ringing phones and the pressures of immediate responsibilities. And, a new environment promotes creative thinking.

You might consider going on a field trip. Take the staff to a bookstore, a library, or a newsstand for one hour and ask them to write down 10 ideas that could be adapted for your magazine. Most important, ask the staff to pray ahead of time for God's wisdom, guidance, and creative ideas in the meeting.

Plan a creative environment
Playful minds come up with creative ideas. Consider bringing toys or colored modeling clay, crayons, or pipe cleaners. Set them on the tables for people to play with. You might provide inspiration by bringing examples of creativity. You might include creative advertisements, unusual products, or video clips. They do not have to be related to your magazine. The idea is to show people how others have thought of good ideas. Ask your staff: What can we learn from them?

Provide a framework for your meeting
Read your mission statement together. Remind the staff of the target audience. You could even bring in someone from your target audience to interview. You should critique past issues and discuss

concerns about the magazine. Then, plan the magazine. Brainstorm by categories. Think of ideas for a particular department, or articles on specific topics.

Teach your staff how to brainstorm

"Brainstorming" is producing lots of ideas in a short time. There are rules for successful brainstorming. While you are brainstorming, don't reject any idea as too wild or too weird. And, don't judge the ideas while you're brainstorming. That means, after someone offers a suggestion, don't immediately explain why it wouldn't work. There will be time to evaluate the ideas later.

Write down all the ideas as you go, using a flip chart or whiteboard, if you can. The advantage of using flip charts is that you can tape lists of ideas on the wall for everyone to see. Then, you can take all the sheets back to the office.

"Bounce" off others' ideas. In other words, let one thought lead to another. An unusable or weak idea can lead to a good one. Don't stop too soon. The best ideas come after you've stated the obvious and predictable ones. A good idea often leads to a great one if you keep working with it.

THE MAGAZINE SKELETON

As you make your editorial plan you will find it useful to review your magazine's "skeleton," the elements that make up the editorial structure of your magazine.

Columns

These are articles written by the people you want to feature in every issue. Usually, there are no more than two or three in a magazine, though some magazines feature four or five regular columnists. Types of columns include: the editor's introduction to the magazine, comments from the publisher or organization leader, humor, thought-provoking commentary, and topics like family, marriage, Christian psychology, health, etc.

Departments

You may want to cover certain topics in each issue in a specifically

identifiable format. A department may have a variety of authors from one issue to the next. Some types of departments include letters from readers, cartoons, answers to readers' questions by experts, devotional quotes, book, music, and website reviews, interviews, news, and topics like health, family, prayer, and finances—whatever might be of interest to your readers.

Articles

Because articles on the same topics and writers don't appear in every issue, articles add the element of surprise to the magazine, and normally comprise the majority of editorial content. Articles may cover a variety of different topics and appear in varying formats, including:

- How-to
- Feature
- Analysis
- Testimony
- History
- Personality
- Symposium
- Essay
- Poetry
- Fiction
- Teaching
- Humor
- Inspiration
- Interviews
- Reporting

Thematic content

Some magazines choose a special theme for each issue, or for some of their issues. For example, a magazine on discipleship might choose prayer as the theme of one issue, with three or four articles covering different aspects of prayer. A subsequent issue might focus on Bible study or evangelism.

HOW TO FIND ARTICLE IDEAS

Where do good article ideas come from? They may come from a wide variety of sources. Some ideas may come from your own experience—what you've learned, or what you'd like to learn. They might include practical skills—how to do something. Some ideas for your own experience might be: *How to share your testimony*; *how to make a budget and stick with it.*

Or, you may examine relational skills. For example: *How to talk to your teenager*; *confronting a fellow believer's sin.* Some ideas might be lessons from personal experience, such as: *How I forgave my ex-husband*; *trusting God in a war zone.*

Other ideas might come from themes in Scripture, like *What the Bible says about money.*

Or ideas may come from characters in Scripture. For example: *What we can learn from the story of Jonah.* A devotional or teaching magazine might also have articles on passages in Scripture, such as: *What 1 Corinthians 13 teaches us about love.*

Consider article ideas from whatever topics grab your attention. Would your reader also find the topic appealing? Is there a book, a person you've met, a sermon, or something you've seen on television recently that made you laugh, cry, rejoice, feel angry or afraid—or just made you want to know more? Think about what article ideas may be suggested.

You know your reader. Ask yourself: What do my readers want to know about topics like relationships, parenting, money issues, jobs or career, growing closer to God, conquering sin, famous people (past and present), or current events and the impact these events will have on their lives? You can find out a lot of these things through research, which is covered in another chapter.

Current events and trends may suggest some article ideas. Ask yourself how a current event affects believers and how might it affect them in the future. You might consider an article outlining a biblical perspective on the trend or event and how a Christian should respond. Or, you might explore questions the event or trend raises.

HOW TO NARROW AND REFINE YOUR IDEAS

After you have brainstormed lots of ideas, how do you select the ones you want to pursue? First, examine each concept, asking yourself these questions as you consider each article idea:

Does this idea help to fulfill our mission? Does it fit our audience (age, lifestyle, etc.)? Is the topic significant to the majority of our audience?

Does the approach to the topic touch the readers' felt need? For example, suppose you want to produce an article about humility. To connect more directly with the readers' desires, you might approach it from the perspective of "*The quality you cannot grow without*" if you

know your readers really want to grow spiritually. Or, "*The quality that keeps you close*" if you know they long for a deeper relationship with God.

Ask yourself whether it is fresh or whether it is likely your readers have read something similar recently. Would you want to read this article? Do you have the resources to produce this article? Do you have authors who can write on the topic and do they have access to information about it?

Can you cover the topic adequately in the space we have, or does it need to be narrowed down? For example, the idea "*What to teach a new Christian*" is too broad. It could be narrowed to "*Teaching a new Christian to pray*." In other words, is this a book-sized idea, or an article-sized idea?

Is this the best way to approach the topic, or would another approach be more interesting or effective? Consider how you could present the topic using various treatments—a Q&A interview, a first-person article, a fiction story, biblical exposition, news reporting, etc.

Next, record your ideas, typing a list of the best ones. Include a tentative title and a few sentences describing each. Consider where the article will fit in the magazine and organize your ideas by department and/or by category: Spiritual growth, evangelism, relationships, etc.

CREATE AN EDITORIAL PLAN

Now that you have some good article ideas and they have been refined, you will need to see how they fit into your plans for the magazine. First, design a chart based on the content of your magazine. (*See the sample magazine chart at the end of this chapter.*) The chart is for a magazine with five feature articles and four regular departments. In each issue, the editors try to have an article on prayer, one on evangelism or missions, one on personal spiritual growth, and an interview. These are not labeled as departments in the magazine. They are simply topics the editors prioritize for the magazine. The informal chart helps the editors maintain balance.

Next, look at the articles on your idea list and see where they fit into the various issues you will have in the following year.

Then, work your plan. You will need to balance it vertically, checking to see if topics are repeated 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 part of 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.

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

You will also want to consider the seasons. Will you include holiday-related articles? For example, will you have 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, while an article on summer missions trips should appear at the time when people would be making their vacation plans.

You finally have your editorial plan. Can you sit back and relax? Unfortunately, no. You will have to keep revising your plan as article ideas fail to work or as time-sensitive article ideas arise. But now you know where you are going and how you are going to get there. So, put the plan on an erasable board or a large computer printout and post it where the whole staff can see it. And rejoice. The chaos of pulling together a magazine at the last minute is history.

SAMPLE MAGAZINE CHART

FEATURE ARTICLES

	JAN/FEB	MAR/APR	MAY/JUN	JUL/AUG
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?	Joy of 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

YOUR TURN

Use this article planning form to think of at least five ideas for future articles. Ask yourself and your team the following questions. You may want to add or subtract questions to fit the purpose of your magazine and its audience.

1. What questions about following Christ have you been thinking about lately?

2. What questions do your believing friends and people in your small group have?

3. What are your or your friends' greatest struggles right now?

4. What has God been teaching you in the last year? What would you like him to teach you?

5. In the last year, what Scripture passages have you wanted to explore, or have you explored and found rich?

6. About what topics do you find yourself thinking, I wish someone could write a good book on _____?

7. What gaps in living biblically and misunderstandings about following Jesus do you observe in the believers you know? What would you like to say to them?

Some categories to get you thinking

• Your relationship with God • Prayer • Ministry

• Character • Relationships • Evangelism

3 WRITING LEADS & CONCLUSIONS

IN THIS CHAPTER:

The lead and the conclusion are among the most important elements of an article. The lead is the reader's first impression of the article. It not only reveals what the article is about, it gives the reader an idea of the writer's skill. If it isn't attractive, the reader may not go on to read the rest of the article. A weak lead that doesn't attract readers can ruin an otherwise promising article. A strong lead that draws readers into the article ensures that the author will be given a fair chance to engage the reader.

The conclusion is important because it is the last thought with which the reader leaves the article. It is a last opportunity for the author to reinforce the main point or leave a strong impression.

YOUR LEAD MUST BE GREAT

Why must your lead be great? Not everyone is already interested in your topic. Perhaps your theme is something they should want to

know about and would be interested in once they got into your article. It's the job of the lead to entice the reader into the article. Also, people are busy. They may have carved out a few minutes to see if there is something they would like to read and they are leafing through the magazine or newsletter. The job of your lead is to stop them in their tracks and draw them into the article.

Also, some people are not natural readers and find it hard work—especially if they are reading in a language that is not their mother tongue. If you are going to convince them to make the effort to read your article, your lead must be a hook to pull them in.

People have many distractions. They may not have the luxury of sitting down quietly with your magazine and giving careful attention to every article. You may have to fight for their attention.

YOUR LEAD'S JOB DESCRIPTION

Your lead has five main jobs. First, it should entertain. You may think, "This is an important topic. People should want to read it. Why should I entertain the reader?" However, even a serious article should start in an interesting way.

The lead establishes the subject of the article, telling the potential reader what it is about. The reader needs to know the topic of the article in order to know if it will be of interest to him.

The lead must attract the attention of the prospective reader, making her stop and take a second look. The lead also involves the reader, changing him from someone whose attention was simply engaged to someone who is reading the article. The lead is a bridge, taking the reader into the article.

WRITING THE LEAD

How long should a lead be? One sentence? Two? A paragraph or two? There is no rule. Don't waste words, but don't unnecessarily abbreviate a lead because you think it should be only one or two sentences.

Don't spend too much time worrying over the lead. You can always come back to it. In fact, it isn't necessary to write the lead first. You

may have gotten a great idea for a lead as you were doing research for the article. In that case, the lead is the place to begin. However, if you are struggling with the lead, skip it and go ahead with the rest of the article. An idea for the lead may come to you as you're writing.

Be as concise as you can be, so that you can get into the article. Readers want to know what the article is about; if the lead is too long, you'll frustrate your readers. However, make it as long as it needs to be. There may be times when you need a little more space to give background or context.

Never start a magazine article by saying: "This article is about..." Your college teacher may tell you to start your assignment that way. That's fine, but don't bore your readers by telling them what you are about to tell them.

Under most circumstances you should avoid starting an article with a Bible verse. Why not? What is more significant than the word of God? The problem is that people are so familiar with Scripture that they will simply skip over the verse. A paragraph or two of Scripture delays getting the reader into the body of the article and doesn't answer the question: What is this article about? The exception to the rule is when you use a very short and especially intriguing or dramatic quote from Scripture to illustrate the main premise of your article.

Your lead should not be misleading. You want your lead to be interesting so that people will read your article. But, don't pretend in your lead that the article is about something more dramatic or enticing than the actual topic of the article.

Be sure you don't "bury" your lead. Read your article over after you've finished the first draft and ask yourself whether the lead you chose is the best one or whether there is something else that would make a better lead.

TYPES OF LEADS

Some leads may be a combination of a couple of different types of leads, though they can usually be identified as one specific type. The following are some types of leads you might want to try to write. *(See examples of most of these leads in the section at the end of this chapter.)*

State the facts
This may be one of the easiest and least interesting leads to write, since it simply tells what the article is about. Or, this kind of lead may summarize the main point of the article. Nevertheless, there are times when this is the most practical lead for an article. Not every lead must be dramatic. However, there is no reason the summary lead can't be interesting if it is well written.

Repeat a quote that is well said or especially interesting or amazing
Use an intriguing quote, one that summarizes the problem situation, or one that previews what the article is going to be about.

Ask a question
This kind of lead can be attractive and is relatively easy to write. Be sure, however, that the question is one the reader will want to know the answer to—or that the reader can identify with. Don't ask a question to which the answer is: "Who cares?" Be sure the question relates to the topic. Don't give in to the temptation to ask a provocative question simply to get the attention of the reader.

Relate an anecdote
Readers love stories and will be attracted to an article that begins with an interesting story. The anecdote should illustrate your main point and lead into the topic of your article. However, it should be a short story. Beware of letting the anecdote become so long and complicated that it takes over the article.

Create an analogy
This is a comparison that illustrates your main point. It may be a short explanation of one thing well known to the reader to infer or refer to a less tangible concept you will describe in your article. It may be a simile, as in "this" (the point I will make in my article) is like "that" (something with which the reader is familiar and agrees).

Make a surprising or interesting statement
The purpose is to attract the reader's attention and make her wonder what will happen next. The statement must relate to the main theme of the article. The reader will feel betrayed if the purpose of the statement is simply to get her attention.

Show a person affected by the problem
Your article may include statistics and important facts, but readers will relate to the topic and are more likely to continue reading if you can start off by talking about a person affected by the situation you will later describe in detail.

Describe a scene
This lead can set the tone for your article and can be an interesting way of introducing your topic. Can you show a picture of the situation you are writing about? This will help draw your reader into the article. However, be sure to keep your description short.

Give multiple examples of a problem situation
Your article may describe a situation or a problem and offer possible solutions. Instead of just stating the main point of your article and going on, you will have more success drawing readers into the article if you give a few very short examples of the problem or situation you want to address.

Make a paradoxical or contrasting statement
Look at your article. Is there a possible paradox you can highlight in your lead? Or can you show a contrast to the theme of your article—perhaps a statistic that illustrates by contrast the importance of your premise.

Create suspense
This kind of lead makes the reader want to see what happens next. However, as with the surprising or interesting statement lead, you shouldn't deceive the reader by building fake suspense. Can you find a legitimate way to create some suspense centered around your topic?

News lead
This lead answers the important questions about the event—who, what, when, where, and sometimes how and why.

Dialogue lead
This lead depicts a conversation between two or more individuals discussing a situation or illustrating a situation you will describe in your article. The dialogue should be short enough that the reader can understand what is being said and who is saying it.

CHECK YOUR LEAD

How do you know if you have written an effective lead? Ask yourself these questions. Does it arouse the reader's curiosity or show a benefit of reading the article? Is the writing compelling? Does it tell the reader what the article will be about? Does it accurately reflect the tone of the article? Does it provide a good bridge into the rest of the article?

EDITING THE LEAD

As an editor, you may be called upon to edit another writer's article. You will need to give special attention to the lead. You may need to tighten a wordy lead. New writers especially tend to include too much explanation. Help them get to the point.

If the lead is weak, look for a better lead within the article. Sometimes an anecdote or quote "buried" later in the article can be moved to the front for an effective lead. However, if the lead just isn't fixable ask the writer to rewrite—if you think he or she can do better. Be sure to suggest several different ways the writer could start the article.

But, if there's no time to go back to the author or if you don't think he or she can write a good lead you may have to rewrite the lead yourself.

WRITING THE CONCLUSION

The conclusion is your last opportunity to get your message across and to make an impact on your reader. For this reason, it is one of the most important elements of the article. Why not just stop when you run out of things to say? Is there a main point you want your readers to take away with them? Get that into your conclusion. Not every article lends itself to a "punchline" at the end. But, don't give the reader the impression you wrote and wrote and then at some point you fell asleep and stopped writing.

COMMON WAYS TO END AN ARTICLE

There is no one right way to conclude an article. Most articles lend themselves to at least two or three different treatments. Here are some typical types of conclusions. *(See examples of most of these conclusions*

in the section at the end of this chapter.)

Summarize your message
This type of conclusion is especially useful if you've made several related points and you want to bring it all together so that the reader has the main take-away—the idea or conclusion you want the reader to gather from all that you've said in the article.

Restate your main points
You may simply tell your readers in brief what you want them to remember and take away from your article. Don't simply repeat what you've said in the article. Try to say it in a fresh way.

Project the future
This type of conclusion summarizes the main points and suggests what might happen next.

Or, you may suggest what could happen if the reader does what the you are saying he should do. However, be careful not to make promises that might not come true.

Challenge the reader to act
You might conclude your article by challenging the reader to take your topic seriously and act on the basis of your premise.

Show how to take action
If your article is describing a situation that should change, your conclusion could simply give short examples of ways the reader might apply what he has learned.

Reinforce your point with a quote
Sometimes a pithy or especially interesting comment from someone famous (or even a Bible character) can be a memorable way to sum up the main point of your article or reinforce your argument.

Give evidence that it works
Here's your last opportunity to offer proof that your suggestions actually work. You might use a short anecdote showing how your ideas work.

Echo the lead
You may refer back to a story or analogy you used in the lead. This

kind of lead works best in short articles, where the reader is likely to remember the lead.

Split anecdote conclusion
If you began the article by telling a story, you may want to end it by telling the rest of the story. You might use this where you start out the article with a story introducing a problem you will solve in the article. In the conclusion you finish the story showing how the steps you took to solve the issue really did work. This kind of conclusion can give a memorable finish to the article.

Combination conclusion
This conclusion combines a couple of types of conclusions into one. There is no rule that you have to use one conclusion or another.

Make your last point and quit
This is how a news article normally ends, and for a news article that is fine. Newspaper readers expect the most important information to be in the lead and the following few paragraphs, with less important information in the last paragraphs.

CHECK YOUR CONCLUSION

It isn't important for you to be able to identify every type of conclusion. However, when you are ready to write your conclusion, consider the various ways you might try for a strong conclusion. Most articles will lend themselves to a variety of conclusions. Don't stay with the first type that occurs to you. It will probably be the type you consistently use. Instead, try for a punchline, leaving the reader with a strong impression. Make your conclusion meaningful and important, rather than simply drifting off at the end.

Don't introduce a new thought in the conclusion. If you bring in a new thought or subject at the end you leave a question in the reader's mind. So instead of leaving the reader with a clear thought or idea, there is a sense of doubt or confusion.

Don't conclude by saying, "In conclusion..." Preachers may say it as they are coming to the end of their sermons in order to encourage their hearers that release is on the way. But, it's unnecessary for writers

to say it. Your reader can see the article is ending. What you want to do is make your ending powerful and strong. After all, it's your last opportunity to fix your message in your readers' hearts and minds.

BE CREATIVE

You have an opportunity to make your article more appealing and significant simply by thinking creatively as you consider how to write the two most important parts of your article—the lead and conclusion. It's easy to fall into the habit of writing one or two types of leads and conclusions. Stop and consider if there might be a better way of introducing your article and leaving a strong impression at the end. After all, you spend a lot of time researching and writing. You want the article to be read and remembered. Consider trying something new. Your readers will appreciate a fresh approach.

EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF LEADS

State the facts

From an article on "easy" Bible translations

Millions of Americans are frustrated in their attempts to understand the Bible. R.C. Sproul has found that 80 percent of evangelicals have never read the Bible all the way through. In a survey of 6,000 people, only 56 percent said they read the Bible on a somewhat regular basis.

Repeat a quote

From an article on hell

"The idea of hell was born of revenge and brutality. I have no respect for any human being who believes in it...I dislike this doctrine, I hate it, I despise it, I defy this doctrine..." So said Colonel Robert Ingersoll, one of the 19th century's most fervent opponents of Christ, Christianity, and hell.

Ask a question

Reason and faith—are they enemies or allies? Is the Christian faith reasonable, or is it simply a blind leap that is ultimately irrational?

Relate an anecdote

Whenever Marian Wright Edelman gives a speech, she tells "the flea story." It seems that in the 1800s, a well-known black woman preacher was speaking to a crowd when a white man shouted at her. "You're nothing but a flea on a dog's back," he sneered. "That's all right," she said. "I'm going to keep you scratching."

Marian likes to think of herself, and those with whom she works at the Children's Defense Fund in Washington, D.C., as "fleas of justice." For 17 years they have kept legislators scratching to come up with better ways to care for our nation's children—20 percent of whom live below the poverty line.

Create an analogy

Imagine you are walking through a garden and you notice a butterfly struggling to leave its cocoon. What would happen if, in an effort to help it, you took some scissors and cut the cocoon away? In a few

hours you would witness a tragedy. The wings, small and shriveled, would not fill out with all their potential beauty. Instead of developing into a creature free to fly, the butterfly would drag a broken body through its short life. The cocoon and the struggle necessary to be free from it are God's way of forcing fluid into the butterfly's wings. The "merciful" snip would have been, in reality, quite cruel.

Similarly, in our efforts to help others grow spiritually, we may interfere with what God is doing in their lives.

Make a surprising statement
Every disabled person I knew, I disliked. The activist who chained his wheelchair to the bumper of a city bus without a ramp. The small group of wheelchair students at the university who complained at the smallest injustice. Not one had my sympathy. The odd thing was, I was in a wheelchair, too.

Show a person affected by the problem
Two women stood in the fellowship hall after our Sunday morning service. I guessed that they were newcomers, as I hadn't seen them before. While I visited with the same friends I always talked with, I watched the women out of the corner of my eye. Neither seemed comfortable.

I really should go over and introduce myself, I thought. But I needed to see Connie about an announcement in the church newsletter. When I had taken care of that, my husband came over and said that we'd better get along.

"OK," I said. "I'll meet you in the car, but first I want to say hello to... Oh, never mind—they're gone."

Describe a scene
From an article on demonstrating our love for Jesus.
The room is filled with the pleasant smells of the banquet. Glowing lamps cast yellow images against the wall, and there is a murmur of quiet conversation.

Suddenly the sound of breaking glass turns all heads. There, kneeling beside the honored guest, is a woman known to them all. Her trembling hands clutch an alabaster jar, broken at the top. From its

rough opening she pours the contents onto the guest's head and then his feet. Glancing hurriedly around the room, the woman lets down her hair and with it wipes the fragrant liquid from his feet.

Give multiple examples of a problem situation
Take a minute to imagine how you might feel in the following situations: A woman shows up Sunday morning in a beautiful new dress. Friends buy a new house you couldn't afford. Another woman's husband surprises her with a romantic weekend away and you know your husband would never think of such a thing.

If any of these situations causes you to feel a slight bit of jealousy–you're not alone!

Paradoxical statement
Christians everywhere sing the words he wrote—"O' for a closer walk with God"—but few know that the author of those words suffered deep depressions and even periods of madness.

Create suspense
From an article on leadership, using King Saul's mistake as an example
I would have done exactly the same thing. I could almost feel myself shudder inside because I realized that my reaction could have been the same.

News lead
Nearly 5,000 pastors, lay preachers, and other church workers came from across the 11 time zones of the Soviet Union to attend a Billy Graham School of Evangelism conducted last month in Moscow.

Dialogue lead
"Célestin?" Her mother's voice sounds nervous. "Célestin, I need to tell you something—Georges is here again." Célestin, who has just come home, turns sharply. "Georges, Mathieu's brother? Here, in town?" "Yes, he got a job at court, as a junior lawyer." "Oh, well…" She sees her mother's worried look and pulls herself together. "Don't be afraid, I'll manage. Now, leave me alone, okay?" She disappears into her room.

EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF CONCLUSIONS

Summarize your message
My fears often try to take control and stop me from sharing. But as I learn to lean on God and act in spite of my fears, I'm finding that it does become easier. And now I'm experiencing the special joy of telling others that Jesus loves them.

Restate your main points
So what can we learn? First, when we truly love Christ we will be compelled to demonstrate that love. Second, when we choose to do so we can expect criticism from others. Finally, when our hearts and motives are pure, the Lord sees what we do and accepts it. Let love and obedience—not pride and conformity—determine your actions. And let him deal with the critics.

Project the future
As you begin to see ministry to those around you as an important purpose in your life, and to plan and pray accordingly, you will be a true missionary—without quitting your job and moving halfway around the world. Like missionaries overseas, you can experience the joy of seeing God use your life to bring friends, neighbors, and co-workers to himself.

Challenge the reader to act
The fiery grace that ignited these believers' hearts has been offered to us as well. Will we kindle our own hearts in its flame—so that our lives, too, will blaze with a passion for God?

Suggest how to take action
If you feel God tugging at your heart, challenging you to minister to the needy world beyond your church's walls, consider the following steps:

Pray about becoming involved in an outreach. Find out about the needs of your town or city. Discover what is already being done through your church or community organizations, and then decide how much time per week or month you can serve.

Ministry within the church is important, but I challenge you to take a risk. Step out of your comfort zone and discover the excitement of serving God in a creative new way.

Reinforce your point with a quote

From a profile:

"We can get so bogged down in our own needs and wanting to be big dogs," she says. "But God uses little people and little things. The jawbone. The slingshot. I believe we just need to lay our little loaves and fishes out there and leave the rest to faith. Let those little loaves and fishes feed however many as they can."

Give evidence that your solution works

I felt good about our approach the other night when Jeremie reacted to a TV scene. "Raymond shouldn't kiss a girl like that unless he really likes her," he said. Even at eight, he's learning that what society calls love may be something quite different.

Echo the lead

Lead: I stared at my piece of paper in disbelief. After months of anticipation, I had finally received my secret Indian name from the visiting spiritual master. "He gave me a man's name," I complained. "I thought he knew everything. How could he make a mistake like that?"

Conclusion: As a follower of Jesus, I know that my name is written in his "book of life" (Rev. 21:27). God is no longer a distant stranger. Through Jesus, he is my loving Father and he knows me by name.

Split anecdote

Lead: It was a bitter January evening in 1992 when the phone rang and my 15-year-old son, Tajin, hollered, "Mom, it's for you!"

"Who is it?" I asked. I was tired. It had been a long day. There seemed to be a cloud of despair hanging over my heart.

"It's Bob Thompson," Tajin answered.

[Body of article... followed by:]

Conclusion: I took the phone from my son's hand and immediately my hand went clammy. I know why he's calling. He's calling to tell me to stop bothering his wife. They probably think I'm a religious kook.

[Description of conversation.]

As Bob Thompson continued to share his wife's story with me, the drab landscape of my own life was transformed. As insignificant as my life appeared to be to me, God used it to shine his love upon another life, resulting in a gift that no one could take away.

Combination

I'll never forget the day I decided to weed the garden. The peppers had just started growing. I wasn't very far down the row when Sharol raced from the house to find me pulling up as many peppers as weeds. You see, seedlings all look alike to me. I wanted a neat garden, but I wasn't carefully valuing each pepper plant. In my eagerness to get rid of weeds, I nearly destroyed our garden.

We are not called to judge whether one person will grow more than another as a result of our investment in them. The issue is rather how we should invest in each one God has given us. As Peter reminds us, lead eagerly and gently. Adopt a style that guards, teaches, empowers and trusts, rather than scolding, blaming, controlling or manipulating. And remember, your sheep are really God's: As you know them, nourish them and value them, you'll be a partner with God in building them up and watching them grow.

YOUR TURN

1. Look at an article you or someone else has written and consider one or two alternate ways the lead could have been written. You will need to read the whole article. If you have time, go ahead and rewrite the lead. Or, take an article you are currently writing. Could you write a more appealing lead? Try writing a type you've never before written.

2. Look at the conclusion of the same article. Think of one or two variations that could have made the ending more significant. If you have time, go ahead and write one of those endings. Are you currently writing an article? Consider trying a new type of ending.

4 MANUSCRIPT EDITING

IN THIS CHAPTER:

FOUR STEPS OF EDITING

USING A STYLE SHEET

As editor of the magazine, you and your staff must edit all articles before they are published. Although you may consult with the writer, especially if the article requires major editing, the responsibility for editing is yours alone.

Your job as editor is to help the writer communicate in a clear, compelling, and accurate way. This means making sure the article has a clear focus and logical flow of ideas. Because the language should flow smoothly and concisely, the editor eliminates anything that doesn't help the reader understand the writer's intent.

The editor checks for accuracy, correcting errors of fact, spelling, grammar, and punctuation. However, there are limits to your freedom in editing. The editor should not change the author's meaning, nor add content without the writer's permission.

FOUR STEPS OF EDITING

As you edit the manuscript, you will go through (or "pass" through)

the article up to four times as explained below. The "passes" described here are only approximate. You may combine some steps or find and fix things you missed from an earlier pass. The main point is to go through the article several times with different questions in mind each time. In general, it works best to narrow your focus as you go.

Before you begin detailed editing, read the entire article two or three times. What is the main idea of this article?

First pass: The article as a whole

As you begin to edit, look carefully at the article as a whole. Does each section or paragraph support the main idea, or do any seem not to belong in this article? Take out any paragraphs or sections that don't fit or would not be helpful to the reader.

Is every section of the article in logical order? Rearrange the article if necessary. If the article is complex, you may want to jot a brief outline in order to get a grasp of the big picture.

Check: Is the article well-balanced? Or, are any of the sections disproportionately longer than the others or "weightier" or "lighter" than the others? Shorten sections that seem too long. Is there a section that doesn't fit the article well, but that has valuable information? Could you pull it out to use as a sidebar? *(See Chapter 13.)*

Check the lead and conclusion. Could they be stronger? Rewrite them if necessary. Will the article fit into your magazine or is it too long? Start thinking about where to make cuts.

Would the article be stronger with more explanation or examples? Consider whether to ask the author to add examples and case stories to illustrate points or dialogue to liven the anecdotes.

Second pass: Narrow your focus

Look at each paragraph and ask yourself whether any of the paragraphs would work better in another order. Do any seem repetitive or unnecessary? Do you need to add transitions (especially if you moved any parts of the article around)? Shorten paragraphs that are too long.

Third pass: Fine tuning

This is where you look carefully at each sentence. Consider tightening the writing by deleting unnecessary sentences. Ask yourself, has this

already been said; would the reader lose any important information without this sentence?

Delete unnecessary phrases and words. Break up sentences that are too long in order to improve the flow. Create a good mixture of short and long sentences.

Check the language. Do you need to substitute simple, everyday words for complex or academic ones? Tone down harsh or "preachy" language. Clarify vague words or phrases and rewrite awkward phrases and sentences.

Vary word choice if the author uses certain words repeatedly. For example, if the author uses *increasingly* in nearly every paragraph. Substitute *more and more*, *growing in*, etc.

Clarify the language. Make sure that the writer has actually said what he means. Watch for unclear or ambiguous meaning. Example: "*He noticed a large stain in the rug that was right in the center*." Was the stain in the middle of the rug, or was the rug in the middle of the room? Watch for the words "*this*" and "*it*" used as a subject. Is it clear to what the subject refers?

Do the subject and verb agree in number and do verb tenses agree? Is the point of view (I, you, or we) used consistently? Is time described consistently? Make sure the author has not switched back and forth from present to past and back to present tense, unless she is using the flashback technique.

Fourth pass: Getting it right

This is when you check everything. Don't take it for granted that the writer is familiar with all the nuances of grammar or that he has double-checked his statistics, references, or even his facts. So, go through the article once more and correct grammar and punctuation mistakes. Spell check doesn't catch all the spelling errors. Proof carefully for spelling errors. Be sure to double-check the spelling of the names of people and places.

Verify that all the facts and statistics are correct. Where did information come from? Is the source reliable? Are the quotes accurate? Did that famous person really make that slightly questionable comment?

Check all Bible verses to ensure the reference and the text are accurate. If you are publishing online, verify that all hyperlinks go to the correct location.

Lastly, check for style. Has the writer used the punctuation, capitalization, and other style preferences of your magazine? (*See style sheets.*)

Finishing touches
Add subheads and decide on a title. Wait at least a day, then go through the article one more time. If possible, have another editor go over the article and suggest changes you may have missed.

If you have made major changes, send an edited copy to the author to make sure you haven't changed any meanings.

STYLE SHEETS: A TOOL FOR CONSISTENCY

Why use a style sheet? Sometimes there is no one "right" way to handle punctuation and capitalization. For example, in English, there is not just one correct way to handle the following questions:

Should you capitalize deity pronouns? What about phrases like *Kingdom of God*? The word *Internet*? Should you spell out numbers over 10? When there is a series of three items (for example: "*red*, *white and blue*"), should you put a comma after the second item? Is it *E-mail*, *e-mail*, *or email*? Should you spell out *percent* or use the symbol (%)?

For cases like these, you need a style book or style sheet to ensure that your publication handles usage consistently. Style sheets list items like those above and explain how your publication will handle them.

Small publications normally don't have the time to produce an entire book listing every conceivable punctuation, capitalization, or grammatical question that might arise. So, you may decide to use a stylebook produced by a major newspaper or magazine. These books are often offered for sale.

However, if you cannot easily get access to such a book, you will need to produce your own style sheet or booklet. Even if you decide to use such a book you may wish to develop a style sheet of your own, handling questions not addressed in the book. Or, in some cases, you

may wish to use an alternate style.

So, what do you include in your style sheet? Anything that is not handled consistently in your language should be identified and a decision made as to how your magazine will deal with it.

It should include a list of words and phrases to capitalize, where it is unclear how they should be handled. It will include abbreviations. For example, do you abbreviate books of the Bible and under what circumstances?

You will need to define rules for handling numbers and statistics. And you'll need to decide how you will handle punctuation when there is not one "right" way to do it. As you edit, you will discover other areas where you will need to define new grammatical, punctuation, or other rules.

A style sheet is a "work in progress." You will add to it as new questions come up. Be sure to give an updated copy to all your editors and proofreaders whenever you make changes.

With all the other responsibilities of an editor, it would be easier and more convenient to shorten the process of manuscript editing. How many passes are really necessary? Perhaps you can manage to check off all the questions in only two or three passes. That's fine. Just be sure to take all the time necessary to make your magazine's articles the best they can be—and above all, to ensure that they are as accurate and true as possible.

YOUR TURN

1. Using the four passes described in this chapter, edit an article that has been submitted to your magazine.

2. If you are reading this book with a colleague, complete the "assignment" separately and compare how each of you did. In many cases, there is no right and wrong way to edit a sentence. So, you may have found different solutions to the problems in the article.

3. If you do not have original articles available to edit, select one or two articles that have already been published either by your magazine or by another. Examine the articles carefully in light of the four passes described in chapter 12 and ask yourself whether the editor could have made changes that would have improved the articles. Would you have rearranged the article or eliminated whole paragraphs? What about sentence structure and word choices? Rewrite one or two problem paragraphs.

5 DISPLAYING THE MATERIAL

IN THIS CHAPTER:

You may have a handful of readers who read every page of your magazine. But most readers are busy. They scan the magazine looking for something they think is interesting or that will help them personally. Your job is to pull them into each article, much as a shopkeeper draws customers into the store with an appealing window display. Skillful use of titles, callouts, and sidebars will help to catch their interest and coax them into the articles.

THE ROLE OF THE TITLE

How important are titles? A short trip to a nearby bookstore or library may convince you of the importance of titles. What titles make you want to read a book? Or, look through several magazines. Which titles draw your attention to an article? What makes the titles appealing to you? You will probably discover some of the following principles.

First, the title tells the reader what the article is about, describing a

benefit for the reader; the reason the article would be worth reading. Titles should be compelling, arousing the reader's interest or curiosity.

Because many articles may appear on your website, as you write the title you should take into account Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and the keywords readers may use to find an article on this topic.

Types of titles
The following are some common types of titles.

Label: This is a straightforward title that simply tells what the article is about, such as "*How I Learned to Love My Mother-in-Law*" or "*The Legacy of Martin Luther*."

Quote: The title may be a short quote from someone who is experiencing the problem described in the article. It should be a statement the reader might make or to which the reader can identify. These are printed with quotation marks. For example, "*I Can Never Forgive Him!*" or "*When I Say No, I Feel Guilty*."

Fractured phrase: You might use a word play on a common phrase, an advertising slogan, or a well-known song, book, TV show, or movie title. For example, the title "*Love, Honor, and Negotiate*" is a play on the wedding vows, "love, honor, and obey."

Question: This type of title can be effective, as long as you don't ask a question with an obvious answer or to which the answer is: "Who cares?" An example of an intriguing question might be, "*Does God Change His Mind*?"

Paradox: You might experiment with a title that intrigues or surprises by making a statement that is the opposite of what we would expect, or that puts together two seemingly contradictory ideas. Examples of paradoxical titles might be, "*Six Reasons Not to Pray*" and "*Toxic Faith.*"

There is not one "right" title for an article. The following are examples of five different types of titles for an article on why Christians suffer. Label: "*Why Christians Suffer*." Quote: "*Help, Lord! My Whole Life Hurts!*" Fractured phrase: "*Singing in the Pain*" (a word play on movie/song "Singing in the Rain"). Question: "*Where Is God When It Hurts?*" Paradox: "*The Good News about Suffering*."

Tips for effective titling

Don't do it alone. Brainstorm with others—editors, designers, and anyone on the staff who is good at titling. Give everyone a paragraph summary of the article prior to the meeting. Write everyone's ideas on a flip chart or board. Take the best, or use the ideas as a springboard to think of even better titles.

Try alliteration or repeated words for a nice "sound." English language examples might be: "*Prayer with a Pen*;" "*The Way of Wisdom*;" "*Getting Over Getting Older*;" "*Words that Hurt, Words that Heal*."

It's great to be creative, but be sure the title fits the tone of the article. Don't use a flippant or "cute" title for a serious subject.

Vary the types of titles you use within a single issue. It's easy to get into a rut and fall into using the same type of title over and over again.

You want the reader to have an idea of what the article is about, but don't give away too much, or the reader will think she doesn't need to read the article. But don't be too obscure, either. The reader needs to know whether the article is for him. Just make sure an intriguing title really is intriguing and not just confusing.

WRITING SUBTITLES

A subtitle is a one-sentence elaboration on the headline. Subtitles are especially important if the title doesn't clearly state what the article is about. The following are some examples of titles and subtitles.

Examples from news stories and features

WHAT DID THE CIA KNOW? *Ante Gotovina stands accused of war crimes. Now the Croat wants his former allies in U.S. intelligence to help prove him innocent.*

THE CHURCH AT THE TOP OF THE WORLD: *Nepal's Christians see unprecedented growth in this Hindu kingdom.*

YOUR BABY HAS A PROBLEM: *Three out of 100 newborns suffer birth defects. But more and more of them can now hope to lead normal lives.*

Examples from teaching/how-to articles

RENDEZVOUS WITH GOD: *How to plan a spiritual getaway.*

LOVING GOD, FEARING GOD: *How can we do both at the same time?*

BEYOND SUNDAY: *Making worship a way of life.*

Examples from first-person articles
KITCHEN TABLE WISDOM: *How a gift I didn't want became a prized possession.*

AND WHAT DID YOU DO FOR SOMEONE TODAY? *My dad's words inspired me to start a health clinic for the needy.*

Tips for effective subtitles
As with the main title, tell what the article is about, but don't give too much away. Don't use words that were used in the title. Your subtitle may explain the title, but it shouldn't repeat it. Be sure either the title or subtitle shows the reader the benefit of reading the article.

WRITING CALLOUTS

A callout is a quote from the article that is run in large type on the second and/or subsequent spreads of an article. The purpose of callouts is both to create visual appeal and to arouse interest in what the author is saying. A pithy callout may draw a reader into an article she had already decided not to read.

It's important to choose a quote that is short, but powerful. You may need to edit the quote slightly to reduce it to the size you need. Pick a quote from the article that is especially profound, intriguing, or controversial. Or, you might select a sentence that captures the essence of one of the author's arguments.

How will you display the callout? Encourage the art director to incorporate an element of the illustration or a design element consistent with the first spread into the callout design.

Don't place a callout in the middle of a column of text, forcing the reader to jump over it to keep reading. Try to make sure the callout appears on the same page it is found in the text. The reader may fasten on the callout, and want to read the context of the quote. Make it easy to find.

USING SIDEBARS

A sidebar is information related to the article, set apart in a box alongside the article. Sidebars provide the reader added value. It is a place to highlight information that might have been "buried" in the article, and it's where you can put helpful related material that didn't quite fit in the article. Sidebars break up the pages visually, making them more interesting.

Types of sidebars

Sidebars may take a variety of forms. Consider trying some of the following examples.

Exercises or quizzes: Be sure to include the answers or a scoring device.

Practical steps to take: Does the article describe a situation? Perhaps you or the author can find information on practical ways to handle the situation.

Related material: This is information that is useful, but doesn't fit the structure or approach of the article.

An opposing viewpoint: Is the topic of the article controversial? Consider a sidebar by someone stating a different opinion. Be sure the author understands this will be used.

Charts, maps, diagrams, or statistics: Some topics will be easier to grasp with charts or maps, which cannot be easily incorporated into the main article.

Reader input: Ask readers to answer a question related to an upcoming article and print their answers alongside the article.

Excerpts: Consider using a short excerpt from a Christian book related to the topic. Quotes from Christian classics (Augustine, Luther, etc.) can provide an interesting perspective from another century on your subject. (Be sure to get permission to use all excerpts.)

Resources: This might include a list of books to read for additional information, addresses to write for more information, or related websites.

Profiles: Add to the impact of the main article with a story about or testimony by someone who's doing what the article advocates, or

someone who is affected by the subject of the article.

History: You may include a brief overview of the history of a person, organization, or movement featured in the article. Timelines can be an interesting visual feature.

A list of Bible verses related to the subject.

A short Bible study: If appropriate to your type of magazine, you might feature a Bible study related to the subject, possibly including verses and questions.

Discussion questions: Will your readers read or study your key articles as a group? If so, discussion questions related to the article would be appropriate and might be appreciated.

Book reviews: Perhaps readers would want to read more about the topic of the article. In that case, reviews of a few key books would be appropriate.

How to find sidebars

Begin thinking about sidebars even as you decide on article topics. Before assigning articles, brainstorm sidebar ideas with your staff. Decide whether to ask the author or someone on the staff to write any sidebars you'd like to have.

However, sidebar ideas may come at any time, especially when editing the article. As you edit, consider whether there is material in the article that could be pulled out as a sidebar.

As they read for work or personal growth ask your staff to watch for powerful short pieces that might be used later. Keep a digital or hardcopy on file by topic, but be sure to save the reference information so that you can write for permission if you decide later to use the material.

WORKING WITH YOUR DESIGNER

The most effective presentation of the material happens when the editor and designer work well together. What can the editor do to help ensure a good working relationship with the designer?

First, do what you can to learn about good design. You may take a

course, read a book, or simply study magazines that look great and try to figure out what they did right. As much as possible, learn the language of design so you can communicate with your designer.

Collect examples of design you like and show these to the designer when you have a specific "look" in mind.

Be considerate of your designer
Talk about what is needed *before* design happens and illustrations are acquired. Brainstorm together; don't simply give orders.

Share information on demographics from research. Help your designer focus on what the readers like and need, not on what you or your designer personally likes. When you do audience research, ask questions related to design.

Give your designer as much freedom as possible—even if your designer's taste is different from yours. Insist on changes only if the design makes the copy hard to read, if the illustration misrepresents the content, or if the design or illustration is inappropriate for your audience.

Before criticizing, ask why the artist did it that way and try to keep an open mind. Explain *why* changes are needed. For example, say: "*Our audience responds to a more traditional look*," NOT "*I don't like it*."

Work together on solutions to design problems. Ask: "*Is there any way to..*?" "*How could we..*?" Rather than making general observations that may be unhelpful, make specific suggestions on how to improve design. Ask: "*What would you think of..*?"

Don't ask for big changes at the last minute! Keep an eye on the design as it progresses. And, the designer needs to know that he is appreciated. Give positive feedback whenever possible.

Your magazine is not just a hodgepodge of articles. With thoughtful use of headlines, callouts, sidebars, and design, you can display your articles attractively, enticing readers to dip into the content you have so lovingly prepared for them.

YOUR TURN

1. Think of potential titles for articles on:

• Five principles to help you get out of debt

• Interceding in prayer for persecuted Christians

2. Look at a two-page published article. Pick out two or three potential callouts. Consider how these callouts would have made the article more appealing.

3. If you have articles on hand that you are planning to publish, brainstorm a variety of different sidebars for each. Try new kinds of sidebars you may have never considered.

6 DEVELOPING WRITERS

IN THIS CHAPTER:

WHERE TO FIND WRITERS

HOW TO TRAIN WRITERS

MAKE ARTICLE ASSIGNMENTS

GUIDELINES FOR WRITERS

TREAT WRITERS WELL

Your magazine needs capable writers. In fact, the skill of your writers has a major impact on the quality of your magazine. But how do you find the writers you need? And how can you work with them to produce the kind of articles you want? If you are publishing for an audience for which there are few good writers, you will have to take the initiative to find and develop new writers.

WHERE TO FIND WRITERS

If you edit a magazine you are probably also a reader. As you read books and articles, ask yourself whether the chapter of a certain book or a magazine article would be appropriate for your magazine. Although you want as much original material as possible, there are times when a reprinted piece would be appropriate. Don't forget to ask permission before reprinting anything, whether you find it online or in print.

Read widely and listen to speeches

Read widely, especially on the topics you want to cover in your magazine. When you find an author you like, consider asking him to write for your magazine.

Listen to speeches and sermons and ask yourself whether certain sermons or messages could be turned into an article. It will require some work to transform a speech into an article. But, if the content is good, it could be worth the trouble.

Also, consider whether someone who is able to express himself well as a preacher or teacher might also be able to write for your magazine.

The Internet may be a source

Don't forget the Internet and social media. Use Google, Twitter, Facebook, and other social media tools and sites to find the top influencers on a topic or in a specific field. Try inputting a keyword or phrase in Google and see what search results appear.

Investigate individual names of people who rank high on Google or other search engines. Go to their websites, blogs, Twitter, and Facebook pages to see how many followers they have, which might indicate their potential strength as a writer or communicator.

Network with others to discover new writers. Ask writers who already work with you—and even writers who turn you down—if they know anyone who might be able to write for your magazine.

Be creative

Some editors have found new writers when they sponsored a writing contest. You can offer to publish the winning articles, and then use the writers for future assignments.

You might also ask readers to submit a short piece on a specific topic. For example, you might ask, "*How would you handle this dilemma?*" (Name a problem, such as: "*Your teenager doesn't want to go to church*" or "*Your friend is dying of AIDS.*")

Or, ask: "*Tell about a time when someone loved you sacrificially*" or "*Tell about a time when God provided for your needs.*" Print the best answers in the magazine, and consider asking the best writers to write a longer article in the future.

Attend the conferences that attract the people you would like to have as readers and writers. Ask if you can present a workshop on how to write for your magazine.

Or, start a writers group or club. Meet regularly with them to encourage them in their writing. You may be surprised to find how many people would like to write.

HOW TO TRAIN WRITERS

Perhaps you have found some writers who are eager to work with you. They have helpful things to say, but their writing isn't yet good enough to be published. How can you help them?

Offer a workshop

Offer a writers' workshop if you have several beginning writers you'd like to train. If you aren't able to organize a workshop on your own, send your most promising writers to a writers' workshop or course. If you can, offer to pay all or part of the fee. Don't forget online courses and workshops. These may be more practical, since your writers won't have the expense of travel and time away from their jobs.

Another possibility is offering an all-expenses paid trip to a writers' workshop as a prize in a writing contest sponsored by your magazine. Even a secular writing course can be helpful in learning the basics of writing.

You may also buy books and manuals on writing like those available from Magazine Training International. Loan them to people who are interested in writing for your magazine.

"On-the-job" training

First, assign an article to a new writer. You will need to give more detailed instructions about how to research and structure the article than you would for a more experienced writer. Consider putting some of this information in writing, so that your new writer can refer to it later.

Warn the writer that it may be necessary to rewrite the article a few times before it is good enough to use in your magazine. Then, work with him on rewriting what he turns in. Explain why changes

are necessary; coach the writer on areas of weakness, whether writing leads, structuring the article, using illustrations, or whatever the problem may be. You may need to ask for several rewrites, first correcting major problems on early drafts, then fine-tuning the article on later drafts. Any writer who has been paying attention and is willing to rewrite will do better on future assignments.

MAKE ARTICLE ASSIGNMENTS

If you take extra care in making article assignments, you will be more satisfied with the resulting articles. The writer will spend a considerable amount of time researching and writing the article for which you have asked. The more the writer knows about your expectations, the happier both of you will be with the result.

Know what you want

You must think carefully about what you want in order to be able to communicate your expectations with the writer. Before making an assignment, you should know the purpose of the article and be able to state it succinctly. Decide the approach you want the writer to take. For example, should the article be a news report, a first-person article, a scriptural exposition, or other format? Consider what questions you want the article to answer and decide on an approximate word count.

Make the assignment

Briefly describe the assignment and give the deadline. The deadline should be at least one month before you need to start editing the piece for publication. This will give you time to send the article back for a rewrite, if necessary. This is also the time to mention whether or not the writer will receive payment and if so, how much. Ask the writer to pray about accepting the assignment. Tell her you will check back in a few days.

Always follow up with an assignment email after the writer agrees to write the article. Tell him again why you gave him this assignment and how much you are looking forward to working with him.

Describe the article you want him to write, including the topic and purpose of the article, the approach, and length. Describe any questions the article should answer and provide any information he

needs to complete the assignment. This includes possible references, potential sources, and the like.

It is also a good idea to describe your magazine and its readers. If he has never before written for your publication include a copy of your guidelines for writers. If your magazine is online, include a link to it. Be sure to emphasize the deadline and verify that the writer is sure he can meet it.

Follow-up
Contact your writers by phone or email two to three weeks before the deadline. Ask how they are doing on their articles and if they have any questions. (This will help prod writers who have forgotten they have a deadline coming up.)

DEVELOP A GUIDELINE FOR WRITERS

The writers' guidelines is a one- or two-page description of the kind of articles the magazine publishes. This is a document you can simply pass on to prospective writers, so that you won't need to keep explaining over and over what your magazine is looking for—and not looking for—and the procedures for submitting articles.

The writers' guidelines helps you get the kind of articles you want and fewer articles you don't want. And, it requires you to put your policies in writing, which can be a good exercise.

You can send the guidelines with the assignment email to people who haven't written for you before. And, you can send them to writers who submit inappropriate material. Be sure to put them on your website or other places prospective readers and writers might look for information.

What should the guidelines cover?
Describe your magazine briefly and its purpose or mission. Include information on your audience: age, gender, spiritual maturity, lifestyle—anything that will help the writer write specifically to your reader.

Suggest general tips for writing for your magazine. What approach should writers take? What makes an article successful for your

magazine? What should the writer avoid doing? Describe the content of your magazine, including the types of articles you publish and the types of articles you do not publish. Do you accept fiction and poetry, but not sermons? Or devotionals and Bible studies, but not news reports or how-to articles? Are any of the columns or departments open to freelancers? Let your potential writers know.

Include minimum and maximum word count for articles and departments.

Your authors also need to know the rules for submitting articles on their first contact with you. Do you accept unsolicited manuscripts, or do you prefer (or require) a query first? If you require a query, what should it include? How soon can writers expect a reply to an unsolicited manuscript or query?

How do you want to receive the article? What format and file type do you prefer? Do you prefer a certain Bible version? Must the author provide copies of the book or magazine page from which written material is quoted?

How far in advance should seasonal material be submitted? For example, in the case of unsolicited material, when do you need to receive manuscripts or queries for the Easter and Christmas issues?

Include the business details

You'll need to cover the business arrangements with your author. If you pay for articles, how much do you pay and when do you make payment? For example, do you pay on acceptance of the article or on its publication?

What rights do you typically demand—all rights, first rights, or second rights? What about digital rights? Your authors need to understand exactly what rights they are giving up. You will also need to clarify whether an author can share her work on her social media networks and if so, how long after the article is published in your periodical.

Tips for effective guidelines

Keep updating your guidelines in order to address the questions and mistakes that come up most often as you work with writers. Use clear subheads and graphics to help writers find information easily.

TREAT WRITERS WELL

Treat your writers graciously, not only because writers who are treated kindly will want to keep writing for you, but because Jesus calls us to treat everyone with love and consideration. What does treating writers well mean in the context of magazine publishing?

How to treat writers

Take the time to explain assignments clearly. Don't make your authors waste time rewriting because your assignments are vague.

Pay your writers fairly—preferably on acceptance of their articles. If you can't afford to pay your writers, think of other ways to reward them. Perhaps you can give them free books from your publisher. Or, offer a free one-year subscription when the first article is accepted. Extra copies of the issue with their article are always appreciated. However, if it is possible, it is good to pay something to writers, even if it is only a small amount. They need to know you value their contribution.

Give lots of positive feedback. Writers may be more sensitive and insecure than you think. Make them feel they are part of the team. Send Christmas cards or other special greetings from time to time. Pass on reader comments on their articles.

Email an article "wish list" every year—the topics on which you are seeking articles. Respond promptly and honestly when they submit an article. If a manuscript is too flawed to be fixed even with a rewrite, be honest about why you can't use it.

Let writers see the edited copy of their work, if there have been significant changes. And, be sure to apologize when you or someone on your staff makes a mistake.

Good writers supply the life blood of your magazine—the articles that minister to your readers and accomplish your magazine's purpose. You may have a ready supply of capable writers eager to pour their energy into your publication. However, most often you will need to supplement your supply of experienced writers with new prospects with an important message but little experience in communicating it.

If you search for these people you will find them—often in unexpected

places. Not everyone has natural writing ability, but with training and experience they may become the reliable writers you need for your publication.

YOUR TURN

1. Make notes for your guidelines for writers. Include:

• A description of your magazine

• The purpose of your magazine

• Your magazine's audience

• Your approach/content (A brief summary description of the kinds of articles you publish)

• The magazine's departments

• Guidelines for submitting a manuscript or query

• Article payment policy

• The rights you require

2. Get together with other staff members and brainstorm creative ways to look for new writers. Can you experiment with any of the possibilities mentioned in this chapter?

7 CREATING A DIGITAL MAGAZINE

IN THIS CHAPTER:

The digital magazine model makes it possible for the editor to include enhanced capabilities that provide an advantage over the print only model. This includes video, audio, and links to additional content. The digital "magazine" may look very much like a print publication or have a completely different appearance. Many editors producing a print magazine simply maintain the print magazine format when they convert to a digital product. However, this means foregoing the unique advantages of a publication that is designed from its inception as a digital product.

TYPES OF DIGITAL MAGAZINES

The term "digital magazine" may apply to a variety of digital formats.

The page flip model

A digital magazine may be exactly like a print magazine in design, except that instead of interacting with the magazine on paper, the

reader accesses it online. The software for the magazine is either a PDF or a platform such as ISSUU (www.issuu.com), which enables the reader to flip through the pages. In this case, the process of producing a digital issue may be the same as for a print issue except for the last step, when a PDF or other file is uploaded rather than printed. Often publishers using this model simply upload PDFs of the publication. However, some page flip platforms allow the editor to include videos and links to additional content available on the magazine's website.

The website format

Another format for a digital magazine is a website organized for a magazine experience, with feature articles and topical content that is regularly updated. While there isn't a clear line between a "magazine" website and a regular website, an emphasis on regularly-updated content and timely features can create the experience of a magazine for someone accessing the website. A key for the website experience is adding fresh content on a regular schedule. If readers come back to the website and do not see fresh content, they will not have incentive to return again and again.

The e-newsletter format

E-newsletters are another type of digital magazine experience. The benefit of an e-newsletter is that it goes directly to the reader's inbox, rather than waiting for the reader to come to the website or online issue. Usually an e-newsletter includes short teasers for several feature articles, with links for the reader to access the full article. Or, an e-newsletter might include one complete article and links to additional articles. E-newsletters must have a regular schedule, so that readers know when to expect the email. Frequency may be weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, or quarterly. When planning an e-newsletter, it's important to create a schedule that is sustainable.

The e-newsletter and magazine website work in tandem for the reader experience, since usually links from the e-newsletter send the reader to the website for complete articles.

The app format

An app to provide regularly updated content is another form of digital "magazine" that users access regularly on their mobile device. App development is changing as platforms become more accessible, but

still may require effort and expertise above and beyond websites and e-newsletters.

THE PROCESS OF CREATING DIGITAL CONTENT

All the best practices of magazine creation apply to digital content as well. Excellent digital content starts with the magazine profile and defining the target audience and purpose. Then comes an editorial plan, a design framework, high quality content, and a well-developed schedule for achieving each step of the process, over and over again, for the desired frequency of production.

Some think that digital publishing is simpler than print publishing. However, in order to have a quality outcome, a thoughtful editorial and design process is essential for digital publishing, just as it is for print publishing. Just because you can write and edit an article in a day, find a photo to go with the article, and post it online immediately doesn't mean you should speed up the process and cut corners on editorial review or the design process.

A high-quality digital publication may be more complex than a print publication, because there are more layers of content available for digital publishing. In addition to a text article, a digital publication may link to an audio or video that augments the information and provides a rich experience for the reader. Such enhancements take time and energy, but maximize the value of the digital experience.

While some digital content might be read on a computer screen, many forms of digital content, including apps and e-newsletters, are often read on a mobile device. The editorial team, working with designers, should pay particular attention to the word count in articles. Since people can usually only see about 100 words on a mobile screen, long articles may be frustrating for readers to follow. Apps and e-newsletters are suitable for digest-style articles that focus on concise writing.

In addition, frequency of updates is an important consideration in the editorial calendar for digital content, especially apps. An app user might expect daily or at least weekly updates, which puts pressure on a small editorial team to keep up a steady stream of relevant content.

Beyond the actual production of the digital magazine, getting the word

out about the digital content is key to engaging new and continuing readers. It is essential to have a social media strategy to share the digital content. Engagement with your audience on social media not only increases the impact of your digital content for wider readership, it can extend business opportunities. Digital content that is widely shared and creates regular traffic through an e-newsletter and/or website can bring advertising revenue opportunities based on volume of readers and their online activity.

CASE STUDY: SWITCHING FROM PRINT TO DIGITAL

In 2013, *Today's Christian Woman* magazine, a long-time print publication of the Christianity Today organization, made the decision to halt print production of the magazine and launch a digital issue. The immediacy of social media and on-demand content online presented new opportunities to engage with readers more frequently and in a variety of new ways.

Today's Christian Woman publishes a digital weekly issue for the iPad, Internet, and mobile devices. Here's how the weeklies are created.

Each issue is based on a general theme
Themes are typically broad enough so that various angles can be explored, which appeal to different segments of the audience. Every issue leads with a note from the editor, and closes with a visually-driven page, such as a Bible verse overlaying a beautiful image. Overall, each issue includes five different editorial assets: "From the Editor" column, three articles, and a Bible verse or infographic.

Editors plan two to three months of issues in advance
The editorial team plans in advance approximately two months of weekly issues and makes article assignments to writers. Each issue strives to create a dynamic assortment of short vs. longer pieces. The editorial format is based on the premise of meeting with readers more frequently and presenting content that is easily accessible, and touches on topics and themes to which women of all ages and stages can relate.

Each manuscript routed to two editors
Manuscripts are routed to editors with two passes, a heavier first edit,

and a copy edit. Once the editor finalizes the article, she moves the file into a design-ready folder. The editor also creates a table of contents document for the designer.

Designer gathers the articles for initial iPad design
The designer gathers all the documents and flows each article with an image into a pre-designed template for the iPad. First drafts of each article are routed as PDFs for commenting and revisions.

First draft proofs
After the designer receives feedback, he revises and routes a second draft of each article. If any further revisions are needed, the designer routes a third draft. Once the editor signs off on each article, the designer assembles the cover and articles into an entire issue for review.

Editorial sign-off
After the editor signs off on the entire issue, the designer prepares final design files and notifies the production team. The production team then uploads the files to Apple, leaving approximately one week for the issue to publish.

Final files sent to production and text added to website
The editor takes the final text and creates online files for the website. The content is published online to coincide with the go-live date for the iPad edition. In this way, subscribers have access to the latest issue on whatever platform they choose to experience it—online, iPad, or mobile.

THE BENEFITS OF PUBLISHING A DIGITAL WEEKLY

Publishing a digital weekly magazine is exciting and energizing. It allows editors to continually feed readers and engage with them on topics that relate to the challenges they face.

It provides a more visual presentation and creates a signature tone and style that readers come to trust. It's easier to build a rapport with a friend one meets with regularly. The weekly format creates a familiarity with the readers, which leads to strong online engagement (for example, comments and sharing on social media).

Readers have multiple ports of entry to content. In traditional publishing, readers discover the magazine only when they come into contact with a printed issue. By publishing digitally, readers may learn about the publication through social sharing, or they may go right to the home page to view the latest issue. There are exponentially more opportunities to increase the size of readership with a digital publishing strategy.

THE CHALLENGES OF PUBLISHING A DIGITAL WEEKLY

While publishing a digital weekly magazine is exciting and energizing, it also can be exhausting. The production schedule can begin to feel like a treadmill. For this reason, the editorial team intentionally created a format they felt they could feed consistently and with quality. The digital issues are small and manageable—as much for the publishing team as for the readers.

In general, the benefits of publishing a digital weekly outweigh the challenges. There's never been a better time to publish magazines!

Case Study Information provided by Marian V. Liautaud, editor of Today's Christian Woman

YOUR TURN

Each digital platform has advantages and disadvantages. Find several examples of various formats and consider which are most accessible to your readers and practical for you to handle long term. List at least one or two samples under each digital platform.

- Page flip model
- Website format
- E-letter format
- App

GLOSSARY

A

Acrobat: A digital application to view, edit, and share files as a Portable Document Format (PDF).

adjacency: Word and image relationship in which a title or text is placed near an image.

advertising guidelines: A written statement of the principles and acceptable standards for advertisements to be included in the publication.

advertising: Information about other products or services printed in the publication in order to encourage the purchase of that product or service by the readers.

all rights: License given to a publisher by an author. "All rights" to publish an article means the publisher owns the article. Anyone else, including the author, who wants to reprint the article must ask the publisher for permission and/or purchase the right to publish the article.

art director: The person responsible for the visual expression of a publication. Works alongside the editor.

article assignment: A request by an editor to a writer to produce a specific article.

asymmetry: Disproportion; lack of symmetry.

audience development: A plan with activities and costs to build and sustain the readers/visitors for the publication.

audience: The persons reached by a magazine, website, newsletter,

newspaper, podcast, conference, etc.

B

bind-in cards: Cards attached inside a magazine, newspaper, or newsletter when the publication is bound. Typically used for advertising.

bleed: Type or imagery that extends beyond the trim edge of a page.

blow-in cards: Cards loosely inserted in the publication either by hand or by machine. Typically used for advertising.

body copy: The actual text of articles, reports, memos, or other communications. To be distinguished from headlines, captions, and subheads. Also called "body text."

boldface: A heavier version of the normal weight of a typeface.

bounce rate: The percentage of visits to a website that end on the first page of the website the visitor sees.

brainstorming: Producing lots of ideas in a short time.

brand: An overall experience of a customer that distinguishes an organization or product from its rivals in the eyes of the customer.

budget: A written financial plan showing how money will be spent and income received for a specific period of time.

bulk sale: The sale of multiple copies of each issue to one location.

bullet: A dot that is used as an organizing or decorative device with text.

burst: A bit of color any size or shape that appears on the cover to bring attention to a special promise inside.

business plan: A written plan for a publication that includes information about its purpose, editorial description, creative description, marketing plans, advertising plans and policies, and finances.

byline: Author's credit line.

C

callout: A quote from the article printed in large type. It is usually placed on the second or subsequent spread of an article. Also referred to as a "pull-quote" or "teaser."

caption: The explanatory text accompanying a photo; usually set smaller than the body type; often set in italic.

centered: A typographic arrangement in which type appears in the center of a defined space.

characters: In typography, individual letters or numbers.

circulation source: Any method used to obtain subscribers or readers of a publication.

circulation: The various people who receive a particular issue of the publication (whether they pay for that issue or receive it free). Also refers to the average number of copies (paid or free) per issue over a given period.

clicks: When a website visitor "clicks" on an ad, button, or link, an impression is registered, and can be counted in Google Analytics.

CMYK value: CMYK refers to the four-color printing process inks. C=cyan, M=magenta, Y=yellow, and K=black. CMYK value refers to the combination of percentages of each color.

color palette: The selection of colors or hues that will be used exclusively or regularly in the magazine.

column: A regular series of magazine articles often written by a particular author or based on a particular theme.

commission: The payment of an agreed percentage of the total price of the publication to a broker or retail seller.

composition: The visual arrangement of all elements in a photograph.

condensed: A narrower version of the normal width of a typeface.

connotation: Idea suggested by or associated with a word, phrase, etc., in addition to its explicit meaning, or denotation.

contrast: The relative difference between elements on a page or

spread. May refer to tonality, color, texture, or size.

corner splash: A triangle of color in the upper right or bottom right of the cover containing special editorial content.

cover lines: The text on a cover.

cover price: The price to purchase one copy of the publication.

crop: To eliminate portions of an image.

cross-sell: A sales technique where a seller encourages current customers to buy related or complementary items.

customer service: The process of addressing customer or reader problems that result in a satisfied and informed customer.

D

deck: A subtitle appearing just beneath or near the headline. Also called a "subhead."

demographics: Statistics related to the nature of a population, such as gender, age, income level, and education level.

denotation: The explicit meaning of a word or image. (The dictionary meaning.)

department: Features to be covered in each issue in a specified and identifiable format.

depth of field: The distance between the nearest and farthest planes that appear in acceptably sharp focus in a photograph.

digital marketing: Any contact with digital readers via social media, public relations, advertising, emailing, search (SEO), keyword optimization, and merchandising.

digital publishing platform: A tool to publish your content digitally.

digital publishing: The digital publication of e-books, digital magazines, and the development of digital libraries and catalogues.

digital rights: License given to a publisher by an author to publish a work on the Internet.

discovery: The process of readers finding what they want or do not know they want. Publishers need to be discoverable.

display: Advertising in print or online that conveys a message visually using text, logos, animations, videos, photographs, or other graphics.

distribution: In publishing, the process of disseminating periodicals to subscribers, wholesalers, or other sellers.

distributor or wholesaler: A person or company that purchases copies of the publication and then resells them to bookshops or other stores.

donor: A person who gives money to an organization or person to meet a specific need and does not expect the funds to be repaid.

E

e-newsletter: A newsletter published in electronic format. Typically distributed by email.

editorial plan: A detailed description of the magazine's content, including types of articles, regular columns, and features.

electronic distribution: The delivery or distribution of digital media content via the Internet.

emotional tone: The feeling a page or image gives the viewer.

engagement: The reaction, interaction, effect, or overall customer experience, which takes place online and offline.

environmental portrait: A photo of a person that includes some of the surroundings.

eyebrow lines: Short, pithy blurbs which give readers a quick look at a magazine's content; mostly placed above the nameplate.

F

feature: A special or prominent article in a magazine.

field: A specific category of information recorded in a computer database.

financial system: The basic accounting system that includes a method for recording expenses and income as well as printing reports.

first rights: License given to a publisher by an author to publish a work the first time, after which publishing rights return to the author.

first-person article: An article that describes a significant experience in the writer's life.

focus: To adjust the distance scale on a camera so that the image is sharp on the focal plane.

font: One design of a particular typeface. It includes all of the designed characters such as numerals and punctuation.

footer: A webpage footer contains information listed at the bottom of the page. The footer is treated as its own section of the webpage, separate from the header, content and sidebars.

format: General appearance or style of a publication including its size, shape, paper quality, and typeface.

frame: To position a photograph within specific boundaries.

freelancer: A person (writer, editor, designer) who works for different companies at different times rather than being permanently employed by one company or employer.

frequency: The number of times each year a publication is produced.

fulfillment: The act or process of delivering a product (as a publication) to a customer.

fundraising: The process of presenting a financial need to another person (the donor) and asking for a donation.

fusion: In design, word and image relationship in which the art and typography are merged.

G

ghosting back: Using InDesign's transparency feature to mute the colors or detail of an image so that the text appearing on top of the image is more readable.

gift subscription: A subscription purchased by a person to be given as a gift to someone else.

go-live date: The date a digital publication becomes available to read.

go-no-go decision: A decision as to whether to continue a new publication or shut it down, based on a deadline decided in advance.

graphic device: Refers to the use of elements (type, rules, space, color, etc.) to help a design accomplish its purpose.

grid: A measuring guide used by designers to help ensure consistency. The grid shows type widths, picture areas, trim sizes, margins, etc.

guidelines for writers: A written statement describing how to submit material and what kind of material is accepted.

gutter: The inside margin where two pages of a publication join.

H

headline: The title of a news story or feature. Typically formatted in large type (or other special treatment) to capture the reader's attention.

hierarchy: Relative importance of elements on a page or features in a publication.

hyperlink: A connection from one source to another digital location, activated by clicking on a highlighted word or image on the screen. Also called "link."

I

illustration: A picture or diagram that helps make an idea clear or attractive.

Illustrator: A vector graphics editing computer software application produced by Adobe Systems.

image: An illustration or photograph.

InDesign: A desktop publishing and typesetting computer software application produced by Adobe Systems.

initial cap: A larger letter at the beginning a block of text.

integration: Word and image relationship in which a title or text is placed near an image.

italic: Type in which the letters are slanted to the right and drawn to suggest handwriting.

J

job description: A formal account of an employee's responsibilities.

justified type: Lines of type that are flush on both the left and right edges.

K

kern: To tighten the space between letterforms to achieve optically-consistent letterspacing.

keyword optimization: The strategic use of specific words to improve search results.

keywords: Words and phrases that editors assign to electronic articles so that they can be searched and ranked on the Internet.

knockout: The process of removing one color ink from below another to create a clearer image or text. When two images overlap, the bottom portion or shape is removed or "knocked out," so that it doesn't affect the color of the image on top.

L

layout: The arrangement of text and graphics on a page or spread.

lead: The opening of an article. It can be from one to several paragraphs in length.

leading: See "line spacing."

letterspacing: Insertion of space between the letters of a word to improve the appearance of a line of type.

limited palette: The self-imposed restrictions on choices for design elements such as typefaces and colors.

line spacing: In text, the space between the baseline of one line and the baseline of the next.

loose lines: Lines of text with too much space between letters and words.

M

magazine profile: A description of the magazine's purpose, intended readers, format, content, tone, and overall design.

margins: The nonprinting areas surrounding the text or image.

master pages: In page layout programs, master pages serve as templates. Users can create master pages for frequently used elements such as folios, text columns, and ruled borders.

mission statement: A short statement that describes a magazine's reason for existence.

mission: The purpose of a magazine; what it hopes to accomplish, the people who will be affected, and the expected impact.

mobile app: A type of application software designed to run on a mobile device, such as a smartphone or tablet computer.

mock-up: A working sample (as of a magazine) for reviewing format, layout, or content.

monetization: To generate and maximize revenue especially for digital publishing products.

N

nameplate: A line of type on the cover of a periodical giving the name of the publication.

negative space: The empty space created on a page by the placement of type and imagery.

news: An article that reports recent events, answering the questions

who, what, when, where, and sometimes why and how.

O

onboarding: The action or process of familiarizing a new customer or client with one's products or services.

open rate: The percentage of the total number of recipients who opened an email.

overprint: The intentional printing of one ink over another.

P

page flip: An effect that makes the pages of digital PDFs appear to turn.

page view: A visit to a page on your website. If the user navigates to a different page and then returns to the original page, this will count as another page view.

PageMaker: A desktop publishing and typesetting computer software application.

pass (as in first or second pass): Each incidence of reading through and making changes in an article.

paywall: Access to all or part of a website is restricted to people who have paid to subscribe to the site or to certain content on a website.

PDF file: A file format that contains all the necessary elements for printing in a single file, including fonts and images.

performance data: Information used to make management decisions about improvements, adjustments, or modifications to systems.

periodical: Any publication, such as a magazine or newsletter, that is produced on a specific schedule or frequency.

Photoshop: A raster graphics editing computer software application produced by Adobe Systems.

placements: Advertising positions on which an advertiser can choose to place ads.

PMS ink: Pre-mixed ink colors that follow the Pantone Matching System formulas and color samples.

point: A unit of measure. One point is equal to 1/72 of an inch. For example, type is measured by point size.

positioning: How the publication compares to other publications and its unique qualities.

preliminary research: Information gathered before the launch of a new publication, website, or product.

printer bid or quote: An estimate by the printer of how much an issue of the publication will cost to print.

production: The process of making each issue of the publication, including editing, design, printing, marketing, and distribution.

promotion code: A code assigned to a promotion effort which makes it possible to track results.

prototype spreads: A template or sample design including styles and formatting that will be used for future designs.

publication: A magazine, newsletter, newspaper, website, or other body of printed or digital material.

pull-quote: A graphic element created from text, in which a quote or sentence is copied from an article and reproduced in larger type, set off with rules or white space. Also referred to as a "callout" or "teaser."

purpose: A written statement that defines what you want to do with your publication.

Q

qualitative research: Any form of subjective research that obtains information based on opinion or emotion rather than statistical fact. Focus groups and opinion polls are forms of qualitative research.

quantitative research: Any form of research that obtains statistical information. Surveys and questionnaires generally are quantitative forms of research.

Quark XPress: A desktop publishing and typesetting computer software application.

query/query letter: A letter in which a writer proposes writing a specific article for a publisher.

R

ragged: Multiple lines of type set with either the left or right edge uneven.

rate card: A written list of the specifications and cost of advertisements accepted by the publication.

readability: Relative ease of reading text.

reader profile: Information gathered, analyzed, and then designed to give authors a picture of their ideal reader.

readers: All people who actually read a particular issue of the publication.

readership: The readers of a newspaper, magazine, or book regarded collectively. An estimate of how many readers a publication has.

redesign: Recreating a design system for a publication, usually in connection with an editorial shift.

referrals: Website visits that come to a website from sources other than a search engine. When someone clicks on a hyperlink to go to a different website, Google Analytics tracks the click as a referral visit to the second site.

renewal rate: The percentage of subscribers who decide to extend their subscriptions. Calculated by dividing the number of renewing subscribers by the original number of subscribers.

renewal: Any printed or digital material (card, letter) that encourages subscribers to pay for another period of the publication. Also refers to the act of extending the subscription.

research: Seeking information about readers' and potential readers' lifestyles, preferences, and demographics.

retention: Activities and actions publishers take to keep active subscribers from dropping their subscriptions.

return on investment (ROI): The benefit (or return) of an investment divided by the cost of the investment. The result is expressed as a percentage or a ratio.

rewrite: When the writer reworks a manuscript or parts of a manuscript at the editor's request.

rights: The legal license to publish a certain work.

rivers: Streaks of white spacing in the text, produced accidentally when spaces in consecutive lines of type coincide.

roman: Name often applied to the Latin alphabet as it is used in English and most other European languages. Also used to identify vertical type as distinct from italic.

S

sans serif: Type without serifs.

Scripture exposition: An article that explains the meaning of a passage of Scripture.

search engine optimization (SEO): The process of maximizing the number of visitors to a particular website by ensuring that the site appears high on the list of results returned by a search engine.

search: To look for a keyword or website on the Internet using a search engine.

seasonal material: Material that is linked to and published during or prior to a season. (Example: Christmas or summer)

second rights: License given to a publisher by an author to print an article which has already been published either in print or online. Second rights often cost less than first rights.

secondary research: Research that relates to your publication or audience, but is conducted by others.

semiotics: Generally refers to a field of philosophy that deals with

signs and symbols.

serifs: Small strokes at the ends of the main strokes of letters.

session: A single group of interactions a user takes within a given time frame on a website. Google Analytics defaults that time frame to 30 minutes.

sidebar: A small article related to the main article and presented alongside it, often in a box.

signature: A printed section of the publication, usually a larger sheet that contains eight, 16, or 32 printed pages.

single copies: Individual copies of the publication that are sold in kiosks, newsstands, and stores.

smartphone: A mobile phone that performs many of the functions of a computer, typically having a touchscreen interface, Internet access, and an operating system capable of running downloaded applications.

social media: Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.

soft return: A carriage return that breaks to a new line but doesn't start a new paragraph.

style sheet (for design): The use of character and paragraph styles within InDesign to easily duplicate text formats such as size, color, and font for various types of text used in a document.

style sheet (for editing): A written description of a publication's style on ambiguous matters such as capitalization, punctuation, use of numbers, and Scripture references.

subhead: A short title that accompanies and elaborates on a title. Typically treated as a secondary level of display type, usually located between the headline and the text. Also refers to headings within the body of the text.

subscribers: People who order a specific number of issues of a publication.

survey: A written questionnaire mailed, distributed online, or repeated over the telephone to readers.

symmetry: Similarity of arrangement of opposite elements in size, form, or position.

T

tablet: A mobile device with a touch screen that serves as a cross between a smartphone and a laptop computer.

tag line: A pithy reminder of the purpose of the publication and its intended market; most often placed under the nameplate.

target audience: The people for whom your publication is produced.

teaser: See "pull-quote" or "callout."

template: See "grid."

text links: A word or line of text on a webpage which can be used to access other pages. Also referred to as a "hyperlink."

text: Body copy of a page or book, as opposed to headings.

title: The name of the article.

traffic: Web users who visit a website.

typeface: A named type design, such as Garamond, Helvetica, or Times Roman.

typography: The arrangement of type to make written language legible and appealing when displayed.

U

unique value proposition: A clear statement that describes the benefit of an offer, how it solves the customer's needs, and what distinguishes it from the competition.

universe: The total number of people who fit your target audience, whether they are subscribers or not.

UPC (Universal Product Code) codes: A barcode system that is widely used to track trade items in stores.

upsell: A sales technique where a seller induces the customer to

purchase more expensive items, upgrades, or other add-ons in an attempt to make a more profitable sale.

user: A unique Google Analytics Client ID, which anonymously identifies a browser instance. Formerly known as a "unique visitor."

utilities (referring to the magazine cover): UPC codes and address labels placed on the cover, which require special design attention to ensure the necessary space is available.

V

vendor (supplier): A company that provides products or services to another company.

vision: A written statement that defines where you want to go, or the effect the publication should have on your target audience at a certain time in the future.

visual: Illustration or photograph used as part of a page design.

voice: Refers to the larger editorial vision and purpose of the magazine.

W

website analysis: The measurement, collection, evaluation, and reporting of web data for purposes of understanding and optimizing web usage.

well: Refers to the section in a magazine containing the feature articles.

white space: The blank areas of the page.

widow: A short line (less than half the column width) at the top of a column.

wrap: A second cover on the publication, usually containing advertising.

X

x-height: The height of lower-case letters without ascenders and descenders. It is defined by the base line and the mean line.

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