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CIRCULATION MANAGEMENT

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Chapter 1

The relationship between circulation, advertising, and editorial



Circulation and advertising should not be seen as totally separate functions. Nor should the product-producing editorial and design areas of a magazine. All departments are linked in overall strategy.

The relationship between circulation and advertising

The advertising and circulation functions depend on each other because they both effect the overall economics of a magazine. Together they determine the circulation strategy, such as which sources are used, growth and pricing strategy, and many other circulation decisions.

Circulation has historically assumed the role of determining where to get subscribers and at what costs. Circulation people should also be responsible for the quality of the audience (not always the case, though.) To achieve this, there must be a close relationship between advertising and circulation and a conviction that they are not separate profit centers, but are instead significantly connected elements of overall magazine strategy.

This means circulation management should be involved in ad strategy, should attend an occasional ad sales meeting, go on a sales call, and in general, be knowledgeable about advertising marketing.

For any publication whose economics are heavily oriented toward advertising, advertising strategy and circulation strategy are completely intertwined. Since advertising is the biggest and most important source of profit for these publications, the needs of the advertising department with regard to circulation size, growth, demographics and mix of source often determine circulation strategy.

Problems when departments don't work together

Unfortunately, there is often very little contact between circulation and advertising departments. Advertising people seldom have anything other than a superficial knowledge of the economic realities involved in meeting rate base. Likewise, since circulation is a sales function, people usually aren't very knowledgeable about the way their publication is positioned and sold in the advertising market.

This lack of communication may cause problems for the publications as a whole. For example, a magazine that is "rate-base" oriented will usually tend to push circulation to the upper limits because it "appears" that higher circulation equals higher ad sales and higher profits. I stress the word "appears" because this strategy is often dangerous to the long-term health of the publication.

Usually, if a publication wants to raise the rate base, it has to expect that circulation profits will decline (paid publication.) As a publication pushes its rate base up, it usually does so by acquiring subscriptions from marginal sources which can be extremely expensive. These marginal sources will usually produce subscribers with lower demographics. So advertising concerns need to be part of the circulation strategy.

Implications for trade vs. consumer magazines

For consumer magazines, the sources used to acquire subscribers are usually the least expensive. On a trade publication there might be an inexpensive source, but it can't be used because it doesn't produce the right audience for advertisers.

Another interesting contrast between trade and consumer publications is that trade magazines are less inclined than consumer magazines to engage

in numbers battles and are more inclined to base advertising strategies on audience quality.

External benefit of working together

Publishers need to think of themselves as information suppliers, and the circulation department is really the foundation of that information. Your circulation file is a dynamic database that is updated every day. Good circulation managers should be able to sit down with management and say, “Here’s the kind of data that I can supply.” You have to take the time to develop partnerships within your own company before you can develop marketing partnerships with advertisers.

The relationship between circulation and editorial

Circulators need to work closely with editors to improve retention. They need to team up with editors to know the subscribers better. Do the

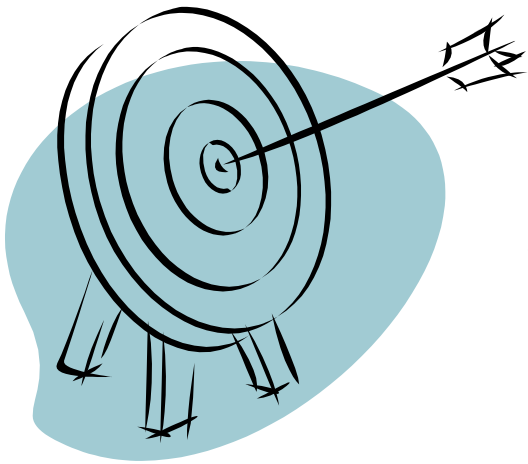
circulation-file demographics match the editorial target and direction? Editorial leadership creates the brand and circulation people create “fan clubs” for the brands. Excellent editorial delivered to the matching demographic creates fans.

If editorial and circulation have their goals aligned and are working together and sharing data, some have suggested that management consider using reader retention as one performance measurement for executives in both areas.

(These notes are taken from an article written by John Klingel for *Folio* magazine.)

Chapter 2

Paid versus controlled



Controlled circulation

In a trade market, wasted distribution, or distribution that is not to the precise target market desired by advertisers, is often perceived as a negative selling factor. And usually the advertising sales department wants a very high market penetration, as well as precise demographics.

Precise demographics and high market penetration usually lead to extremely high acquisition costs. This is why many trade publications opt to give their publication away (controlled circulation) rather than pay high acquisition costs; and it is often the only way to obtain high market penetration.

Paid subscription

Most consumer magazines and some trade magazines (*Advertising Age*, *Oil & Gas Journal*, for example) depend on paid subscriptions. The paid readers produce income for the publication as well as indicate to advertisers that people are interested enough to pay for it. These publishers are usually able to charge for subscriptions because they have no competition or very little or weak competition which allows them to charge for the publication and achieve deep market penetration.

Combinations

Paid circulation with a controlled portion

Any consumer publisher that sells advertising in their publication carries a small segment of controlled (usually non-qualified) readers who are advertisers, their agencies and promotion copies. A few consumer publishers take this one step further: they are primarily paid, but they have developed a controlled segment of readers that are in some way

affiliated with their paid reader base and thus, a target for some advertisers. Some examples of this type of combination strategy include: *Parenting Magazine* sends several thousand copies of each issue to a controlled base of pediatricians, obstetricians and family practitioners. These copies are read by pregnant women and new parents while in the waiting rooms. *Eating Well* sends controlled copies to physicians and dietitians. *Southern Accents* sends controlled copies to the American Society of Interior Designers.

The key to this approach (for consumer publishers) is advertiser acceptance. You should not use controlled circulation unless advertisers accept these copies as being included in your rate base. Some consumer advertisers consider nonpaid copies to mean nonread copies and therefore, of no value to them.

Consumer publishers must run the numbers to see if the increased advertising revenue attributable to the

controlled copies will pay for the marginal service costs of these copies.

Controlled circulation to public places (waiting rooms) is also an excellent way to generate subscriptions through multiple insert cards in the publication.

Controlled circulation with some paid subscribers

Many business publishers have primarily controlled circulation, but they charge readers who fall outside the perimeters of the audience they are delivering and/or for foreign subscriptions. Facing increased competition for fewer advertising dollars, many controlled publications have been working to maximize list rental revenue and develop ancillaries. In the past, business publishers used controlled circulation only. Then they got into list rentals. More and more are going to be looking to develop some paid circulation.

Assuming that you are not relying on marginal segments to meet rate base, there's little to lose by getting non-qualified readers to pay. You don't want to be giving away magazines to peripheral groups of people who aren't contributing to your advertising story.

Variations on this theme include targeting by geographic area. If you are a regional publication, for example, you can charge for subscriptions delivered outside of your region.

Converting from controlled to paid circulation

Editorial need is the prime prerequisite. Is it suitable for convincing controlled subscribers to pay for it? This is the acid test of your publication's editorial value.

Here are a few objective measures that you can investigate to ascertain your publication's positioning in this regard:

- **Reader survey results**—What articles do your readers read and use most, year in and year out?
- **Readership studies**—How does your publication rank among its competitors in terms of time spent reading, frequency of reading, overall trust and editorial authority? Does it consistently come out on top?
- **Letters to the editor**—Do readers take issues with substantive points and interpretations, or just point out errors?
- **Requalification rates**—Your rates should outpoll any competitors by 5 to 10 points for several years running.
- **Direct reader input**—What do the people in your industry have to say about the publication when you meet them at shows or in the field?

- **Advertising share**—What is your share of ad pages and dollars? The less dominant your publication, the greater the risk. Ideally, it should be gaining in share for you to consider converting to paid.
- **Market conditioning and positioning**—Your market and how readers have been conditioned will greatly influence your odds for success. Assess trends over time, not just the current status. Investigate whether your target market has the authority to pay from the company budget and whether they think they can find a free substitute for what you provide.

When attempting to convert, you are trying to reverse every message you have sent out over the years. Also know that paying subscribers will not supply you with as much qualification data.

The impact of conversion on the organization

Publishers must make sure they have proper fulfillment and customer service systems in place, as a foundation, to support conversion and ongoing maintenance of paid circulation.

In addition, they need to consider the corporate commitment to the conversion. Two critical questions to consider are: How much money are they willing to risk on this project and who is taking responsibility if it doesn't work out?

Conversions are not a quick fix. They usually require a long-term commitment and substantial investment before a company sees a pay-off. There are very few executives who can successfully defend a long, costly process in the face of pressure for short-term results.

A typical conversion program can require between three to five efforts. Overall net conversion rates



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generally range between 3 and 12 percent for markets saturated with controlled publications. Net response as high as 30 percent is not unheard of in single-publication markets, but only when the publisher has been willing to strictly adhere to the removal of non-conversions and lower the rate base, if necessary.

Chapter 3

Circulation promotion and modeling



The volatile and ever-changing nature of circulation makes it an inexact science at best. Short-range (six to 12 months) planning in circulation should be the means used to establish longer-range planning decisions. The planning process should never really stop. The key to planning in circulation

is to be current.

Modeling and forecasting

Computer modeling can play an important role in developing your understanding of the long-range effects of various decision options. Modeling should be used primarily as a planning tool. There are two critical pieces of information generated as a byproduct of any model run. Assuming the run delivers the necessary paid circulation level the two questions are:

1. How much new business is needed to meet that level?

2. How many renewals did you sell? And what kind?

Computer models can be predictive or not. Predictive models attempt to make judgments about weakly-defined relationships, such as predicting the change in a renewal percentage due to a price increase or a change in frequency. Non-predictive models do not attempt to make such judgments, and the only built-in assumptions are those that are well-defined, such as that a one-year subscriber will expire twelve months after the first issue is served.

The greatest benefit in using a model is the ability to change plans or assumptions and quickly see the effect of the change on circulation, cash flow or profit and loss. If an idea is not very good, it quickly becomes apparent because the profit falls.

Remember that a model is only as accurate as your least accurate assumption.

If your forecasts are good, a one-year model can be accurate in monthly circulation, income and expenses to within one percent. Your forecasts for several years ahead are, at best, a good guess. Long-range modeling is used for testing strategy.

It is risky to oversimplify this business. However, as renewals go up, your new business requirement usually goes down. If your long-range plans do not show either a reduction in new business sales and/or an increase in renewals as a percent of your list, it is time to rethink your operating plan.

Longer-range profitability hinges on the nature of the new business that you sell today. Generally speaking, the more voluntary the source, the better that source will renew. By voluntary, we mean that the decision to subscribe has been made by the consumer without any pressure.

For example, the potential subscriber received a piece of direct mail from the publisher, elected to open it, presumably read it, and has consciously decided to act. This source of new business will sometimes renew five, even ten times better than some involuntary sources (telemarketing.)

Every current expire group is composed of business sold in the past. How that business was sold originally (method of sale) will determine how that expire group will renew. No amount of creative genius will significantly improve the renewal percentage of an expire group that contains a large number of subscribers who really didn't want to subscribe in the first place.

Nowhere are the dynamics of circulation more misunderstood, and profit sacrificed, than in this new business/renewal cycle. It usually costs more to initially bring in high quality, better renewing business. Generally, the only reason to acquire

subscriptions from sources that don't make a profit (at least by end of year two) is to sell enough advertising or other products to these subscribers to more than offset the acquisition costs.

As one circulation consultant so aptly stated: "Ask the greeting card people what they would do if forced to maintain their fourth quarter sales in May, June and July. Ask the suntan lotion people how they fare in January. And how much of Seagram's business is holiday related? The problem in circulation is unique: you have to sell just as hard year round."

The magazine business may be one of the few businesses whose pricing structure is governed by its own auditing rules. BPA and ABC rules dictate what is to be counted as paid circulation and what is not. Can you imagine General Motors being told that if it sells a car at 50% off its suggested retail price, that car can't be counted as a properly sold unit? A little far fetched perhaps, but this rule points out how important it is

to properly establish just what your basic price is (for paid subscriptions.)

In this business the basic subscription price should be a benchmark only. The important price is the one at which you are going to sell the majority of your business. Consumers are not aware of, nor do they seem particularly affected by, the price per issue. The important number to your customers is the amount they have to pay.

All circulation decisions should be based on historical fact. Whether the historical information includes last year's comparable data or last week's total order production versus your plan, the key to circulation management is to use history to guide future actions.

Circulation sources

The term source is used to describe major sources for acquiring new and renewal subscriptions. What

is called source evaluation in the magazine industry might be referred to in other businesses as financial analysis or cost analysis. One of the objectives of source evaluation is to find which sources are the most profitable and, consequently, to produce the best mix of sources for any particular magazine.

Here are the major characteristics of sources:

- 1. Availability**—How many subscriptions will the source produce?
- 2. Timing**—During which months will the source produce subscriptions and how easy is it to control timing?
- 3. Predictability**—How easy is it to predict volume? (Sometimes it is just as bad to be over rate base rather than under.)

4. Acquisition cost—What does it cost to obtain subscriptions from the source?

5. Renewability—How well will the source renew?

6. Risk—What is the probability that an investment in the source will be successful? How much are you risking for a projected result?

7. Other factors—Does the source have a particular value or negative aspect for advertising sales (for example, directory or association names for a controlled publication)

Profitability for paid publications:

Most larger volume sources are unprofitable the first year. They become profitable later only because renewals are less expensive to obtain than new subscriptions.

Circulation profit occurs over time. You can't simply analyze what happens in the first year in terms of profits or loss; you must look at profitability over the long term. And if you invest \$1 today and get back \$1 two or three years from now, inflation will have reduced its value and in fact, you have lost money. This time value of money is a major factor when evaluating return-on-investment for projects where the payback is over a long period of time.

The key to source evaluation is segmentation. The more we segment, the better we improve profitability.

Here are sources that are used (in various mixes) by publishers for acquiring new subscriptions:

- Your subscription expires/cancels
- Advertiser lists (manufacturer, supplier, etc.)

- Competitive publication lists (a few do rent them out)
- Reader service respondents
- Referrals from current subscribers
- The Internet—your site, search engines, and links
- Seminar and conference attendee lists
- Direct mail
- Your magazine—house ads and insert cards
- Agencies

Chapter 4

Circulation audit



The primary reason a publication (consumer or trade) makes a decision to become audited by an independent firm is because advertisers (and their agencies) require the audit to verify circulation data. An independent circulation audit also forces data into a relatively uniform format so it is easier for media planners to analyze and compare circulation data for numerous publications.

On the publication side, an advantage realized by an outside audit is that the schedule, regulations and rules imposed by the auditing firms requires a disciplined approach to circulation record-keeping.

There are two organizations that currently conduct circulation audits for publishers in the US: BPA and

ABC. Up until a few years ago, BPA handled trade audits and ABC performed audits. Both BPA and ABC are doing audits for trade and consumer titles, although they still tend to keep to their original market.

For publishers who are faced with selecting either BPA or ABC as their audit firm, consider which one your competitors are using. If they are primarily BPA audited, then BPA should be selected or vice versa.

There are four classes of membership for BPA and ABC:

- Advertisers
- Advertising agencies
- Publishers
- Associates

Even though you pay to become a member of BPA or ABC, applicants must be voted in by a majority of the Board of Directors. After initial approval, applicants

do not become members until the publication's initial audit has been completed and approved by the Board of Directors.

BPA and ABC require a publication to specify an audit cycle for twelve months: May or November. This means that a May audited title will submit its file six month audit data for January-June and the May issue will be the primary audit issue for the period and the year. An interim audit will be filed for July-December with the November issue highlighted. The opposite is true for a title selecting a November audit. Field auditors conduct an on-site audit for a publication's main audit period. Publications can switch their initial audit cycle from May to November or from November to May, if they deem it necessary, by sending a letter to BPA or ABC. Permission is usually granted.

Publications that have their circulation audited must adhere to a long list of rules and regulations for how subscriptions (paid or controlled) are solicited, maintained and serviced.

Chapter 5

Circulation fulfillment



What is circulation fulfillment?

Circulation fulfillment is the complete process charged with ensuring the delivery of a subscription to the reader and tracking all the information related to that transaction.

While “circulation” covers the sales and marketing of the subscription, “fulfillment” begins after the sale and consummates the transaction. It “fulfills” the contract that circulation made with the reader, and, at the same time, it monitors the events that may apply to that subscription.

The fulfillment system tracks the name and address of the subscriber, when the subscription began, how many issues have been delivered, whether the subscriber paid or renewed, and so on.

Here is a list of the items typically recorded in a fulfillment database or worksheet:

Subscriber and order database

1. Subscriber code
2. Subscriber name
3. Title
4. Bill-to/ship-to addresses
5. Source codes (including agency source code)
6. Bill-to company code(s) and subscription codes(s)
7. Promotion codes
8. Renewal and/or verification codes
9. Product codes
10. Term(s)
11. Start and expiration date(s) for both paid and controlled
12. Date of original order(s)
13. Number of renewals (automatically updated)
14. Subscriber demographics

15. Accounts receivable balance
16. Last payment, type, date and amount
17. Rate paid
18. Suspension date(s)
19. Date of last update
20. Credit card number
21. Credit card type
22. Payment code
23. Batch code
24. Contact information: personal phone number, fax, and email for international and domestic
25. Original source code
26. Complaints/service code
27. Record type
28. BPA data
29. Donor/recipient information and history
30. Continuous service since ____/____/____
31. Premium issued

While the circulation function is rarely sent out to a vendor, many publications do have their fulfillment performed by a service bureau. Whether done in-house or by a service bureau the information required to sustain the circulation objectives is the same.

Sampling of circulation reports

1. Update/Transaction Report

- Provides a summary of transactions (orders entered, accounting entries, etc.) processed per day, week, month, and per update.

2. Production Report

- Used to analyze production by major sources and compare weekly and monthly progress to the circulation budget.
- Provides a summary, by date of orders received and processed, separated by original promotion codes.

- The report should also include not only the cash and credit payment by the cancellations but by source as well.

3. Production of Audit Reports (BPA)

4. On/Off Reports

- **On/Off Report in BPA Format**
 - Lists “ons” and “offs” by subscriber name and match code showing start and end dates; issue last served and previously served; and account status (active, reinstated, graced, suspended).
- **On/Off Report by Source**
 - Shows a breakdown of the number of subscribers by source.
 - The report also subtracts the deletions from the file within the time frame.
 - The additions and deletions are calculated and a net total is produced. This total should

be equal to the number of labels actually produced

- Generates press run

5. Cancellation and Reinstate Detail

- Subscriptions canceled or reinstated and the number of cancellations for which supplements have been served.

6. Label Print Run Report

- Summarizes and backs up the label production for a strip or supplemental run.

7. Report of Promotion/Renewal Notices Generated

- Provides summaries on date of issue and at month end of promotional/renewal pieces generated and mailed for the paid circulation.

8. Order Entry and Processing

- Generation of operational reports that include data entry operator ID, identifying orders entered, pricing overrides made, unusual occurrences.

9. Future Ship Processing

- Automatic generation of a report showing the quantity and subscriptions needed in the future.
- Generation of reports identifying back issue publications by date.

10. Grace or Reinstate Processing

- Reports identifying number of grace copies issued, number of reinstated entered.

11. Free Subscriptions Processing BPA (Complimentary List Paid Only Files)

- Generation of management reports identifying complimentary subscriptions detailed by requesting department, reason, and to whom shipped.

12. Rate Categories and Discounts

- Report summarizing discounts given on a monthly basis by customer and by authorization.

13. Invoice/Renewal Printing

- Generation of reports identifying number of invoices/renewals printed.
- Ability to run invoices/renewals to disk/file

14. Reports totaling number of addresses printed per issue and copies served.

- Zone report

- produced for first-class presort.
- produced for 2nd-class publications upon label generation.
- produced for 3rd-class presort.
- Each mail mode (label break) gives data by origin and, within origin, by zone.
- Displays subtotal, by state, of total labels and copies and shows number of labels and copies of comps (included in zone total).
- Label print 4-up (east to west) with electronic eye symbol (bar) according to specifications
- Totals by mail mode.
- BPA postal reports including country within region.

Chapter 6

Budgeting



Without this feedback mechanism, used by the circulation department and by the advertising departments, it would be impossible to grow and nurture the publication or to even know if progress is being made or if problems are developing.

The key to effective circulation management is knowing how to create and use the best possible budgeting and planning system. A formal, detailed budget should be prepared once or twice a year, and viewed as just one exercise in an ongoing planning process.

The circulation department is really the only operation in a publishing company that can actually measure every dollar that it spends.

It is the nature of circulation, with its countless assumptions, that change is inevitable. The budgeting process in circulation starts with only one “given”: the expired inventory of your subscriber list at a particular point in time. Everything else is an assumption.

A circulator must always keep in mind the possible ramifications that circulation decisions will have on the other areas of publishing.

Just like in editorial and advertising, you must have a plan for new and renewal activity before you can create a circulation budget.

Build, or use, a detailed model with your expected production from each source in each month through the end of the budget year. The model will give you a circulation, print order, cash flow (for expenses--and revenue if you have paid circulation), and profit and loss forecast for your budget year. If you don't like

the forecast, change your plans and run the model again.

Get the most from your budget model

To get the maximum value from your budget model, you should update it on an issue basis with actual new subscriptions from each source. You can get the information from your fulfillment reports. This will do several things for you:

- 1. You can check if your model's renewal percentages are correct.** Models built by experienced modelers come within one percent of actuals when they are updated.
- 2. You get a reforecast of the remainder of the budget year,** and you can see if an adjustment in plans is called for. A requalification effort that pulls better than expected might let you cancel or reduce a later effort.

3. You have an up-to-date model you can use for next year's budget. You can also respond quickly to management's "what if" questions.

Primary components of a circulation department budget

- 1. Salaries, bonuses, fees**—consultants
- 2. Fulfillment**—List maintenance: address changes, pulling labels for magazine mailings, customer service, pulling and mailing renewals and invoices.
- 3. Postage**—For mailing new promotion, renewals, bills and back issues.
- 4. Promotion**—For new subscriptions: cover wraps, bind-in/blow-in cards, post-cards, telemarketing, broadcast fax, direct mail,

agencies, creative, etc. For renewals: same as new.

5. Single Copy Sales—For paid-primarily consumer: distributor fees, retail display allowance, freight, and promotion.

6. Research—With readers, i.e. reader survey, allocation is dependent upon type of research conducted and corporate policy—could be placed under marketing budget.

7. Audit—Some publishers place this under the advertising budget because it is conducted for advertising purposes.

8. Travel—To conferences, trade shows, etc.

9. Trade shows—Exhibit fees—if the primary purpose is to solicit new/renew subscriptions.

Chapter 7

Postal concerns



Are you eligible for a reduced postal rate?

Depending on your country's postal regulations, a publication (whether circulated free or to subscribers) may be authorized to be mailed at a reduced rate for periodicals. In the United States, a publication qualifies for the Regular Periodicals rates if it meets these basic standards:

- Each issue contains at least 24 pages.
- No issue contains more than 75% advertising.
- The publication is not owned or controlled by one or more individuals or businesses, and is not offered as an auxiliary for the advancement of the business.

Publications who want to use the “Regular Periodicals” postage rate must meet these circulation standards:

- 1. The publication must have a legitimate list of persons who have requested the publication**, and 50% or more of the copies must be distributed to persons who have made such requests.
- 2. Subscription copies** of the publication that are paid for or promised to be paid for, including those at a discounted rate, may be included in the determination of whether the 50% request requirement is met.
- 3. If a person’s request was induced by a premium offer** or by receipt of material consideration, it is not considered a request.

4. Records of requests and subscriptions must be maintained, by title, so that they can be verified.

5. Requests that are more than three years old are not valid requests. Copies addressed using an alternative address format are not considered requested copies.

6. When a publication is issued by a membership organization, the organization may have a policy that each member receives a copy of each issue of the publication. Records must be kept to show that the publication is sent to organization members.

If the postal service in your country offers a periodicals rate, they will most likely require that the publisher maintain records that can support information required in the application and to confirm eligibility at the requested rate.

These records may be used to meet application requirements:

- Print orders and invoices showing the total number of copies printed.
- Individual and bulk orders for subscriptions and nonsubscriber copies.
- Newsstand and vending machines sales and returns.
- Stubs or copies of receipts issued.
- Sales records and returns for over-the-counter sales.
- Cash books, bank deposit receipts, or similar records.
- Records of copies of the publication destroyed.

How can minimal handling in the mail benefit your magazine?

One of the goals for your publication is minimal handling in the mail, which reduces damage and improves service.

Here are a few ways of achieving this:

- 1. Additional entry points.** Publications that are time sensitive and have a larger circulation may be printed in several locations and/or drop shipped from the printer in order to lower the number of postal zones per shipment.
- 2. Exceptional dispatch points** are the points at which some publications, after obtaining permission, are allowed to enter the postal system at unofficial entry points to improve service. (These are usually close to additional entry points.)

- 3. Plant loading** means that instead of publications going to a post office from the printer, they go to a post office transportation gateway center for further connections or delivery. (There is a minimum weight requirement.)

- 4. Palletization** means that the printer labels the magazines and then puts them on pallets. Not all postal facilities have pallet-moving equipment.

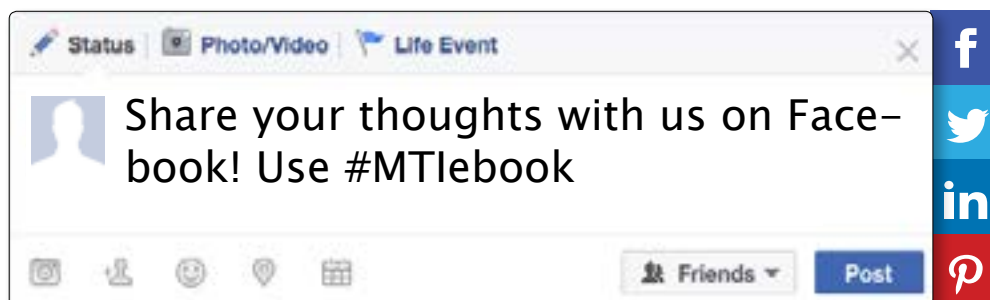
- 5. Containerization** is unit shipping that is an alternative to air freight.

- 6. Skin sacks** is a sack containing a small amount of mail. Some news publications use this to make close transportation connections or mail cut-off times.

Beyond the book

In what ways can you better manage your publication's circulation?

More information on the business of magazines can be found in the "Managing the Magazine with Confidence and Skill" training manual. To purchase the complete manual, visit: www.magazinetraining.com.



About the author



Lou Ann Sabatier loves publishing, as evidenced by her 35-year career in strategic planning, business development, market research, audience development, management and finance. Lou is principal of Sabatier Consulting, where she has worked with over 100 media clients, giving them the tools they needed to increase profitability. Prior to founding the consulting firm, she worked as a literary agent, as managing director of an international economic magazine, as associate publisher of a national opinion magazine and CEO of a media company. She speaks widely at conferences and workshops throughout the world. Lou is strategic communications director for the 21st Century Wilberforce Initiative, a Christian non-profit advocating for religious freedom. She also served as a trainer with MTI in India and Kenya.

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