

# Publication Development

## IDEAS FOR IMPROVING YOUR PUBLICATION

As gathered from various magazines

---

**Highlight a benefit:** Promote the magazine itself with one page highlighting a reader service or response card, subscription promotion and perhaps a gift subscription campaign.

**Promote ad deadlines** and themes of upcoming issues on the magazine's fax cover sheet.

**Use the telephone on-hold message:** If you use a telephone on-hold recording, use it to promote upcoming issues.

**Holiday subscription special:** Have a holiday subscription special that offers a small gift (candy, perhaps) and a gift card for the recipient and a discounted annual rate for the sender.

**Illustrated calendar:** Produce and insert an illustrated calendar for the upcoming year in the November issue. Tie-in with a readers' photo contest

**Using the inside back cover:** Use the page facing the inside back cover for a consistent editorial topic or photo; some magazines use humor, some use it for a flashback theme, some use it for a full-page human interest photo.

**Interact with Web site:** Increase the interaction between your Web site and your print product. One should drive the viewer to the other. The Web site might have material that was not included in the print version.

**Define production workflow:** Establish a detailed production workflow, including who is responsible for each step and what is done.

**Readers' board:** Establish a readers' advisory board and use it to test article and promotional ideas and to get critiques of issue content.

**Work on coverlines:** Spend plenty of time on coverlines; they must be strong and interest-grabbing.

**Test coverlines:** One magazine tests possible covers (and coverlines) online and gets readers to vote for the one the coming issue. Covers are left up for about a week.

**Promote any awards :** If the magazine has won any awards lately, make a big deal of them and use that fact to promote the magazine to staff, readers and advertisers.

**Partner with a charitable organization:** Some regional and community magazines have found a way to boost circulation by partnering with a charitable community nonprofit organization. This not only can boost circulation but improve goodwill and public relations. The idea is that if someone buys a subscription, the publisher will donate money to the local nonprofit. This can work especially well toward the winter holiday season.

**Check several sources for free lancers :** Finding freelance writers can be a challenge. Check for a local writers' club in the community. Consider swapping freelancer lists with another publication. Use the Internet: About.com—freelance writers (several hundred sites); writerswrite.org; writing.org.

**Partner with a state agency:** Partner with a state agency that wants to produce a consumer reference guide that can be produced in magazine format.

**Use readers' opinion polls :** Have an annual "best of" readers' poll, publish the results and provide winners with laminated ad boards.

**Distribute special sections as stand alones:** Consider distributing special sections as supplemental publications that are polybagged with the main publication. This works especially well for topics such as guides to summer camps, dining or menu guides, or visitors' guides.

William L. Needham  
Manager, Publication Development  
The Printing House, Ltd.  
needhamb@theprintinghouse.com  
(850) 875-1500 ext. 104