



JOHNSON PRESS OF AMERICA • volume 5 • issue 5 • september 2011

JPA publishers share their top tips

In the hectic world of publishing, editors and publishers seldom have the luxury of slowing down to compare notes. But it can be helpful from time to time to learn what has worked for others in the field and what has led to headaches.

With that idea in mind, we've gathered publishing advice from several JPA clients. Their suggestions run the gamut, from writer relations to technological tools. Some ideas deal with new developments in the field today, and some are timeless business strategy reminders that can benefit anyone. So let's get started.



1. Do the research. "If you're going to start a new publication, you want to make sure there's sufficient customer demand," says Tom Bengtson, editor and publisher of Minneapolis-based *North•Western Financial Review*. "In a lot of cases, people start something because they want to write about a particular subject. That's a publisher-led product. You need to be consumer led."

For a publication to have staying power, a publisher must determine if there are enough people out there who share the same passion for the magazine's subject matter and who can create a market for advertisers, Bengtson said.

2. Develop a digital strategy. Bengtson says he has found it helpful to develop interwoven

strategies for his organization's print and online products. These products do not duplicate each other, but instead work together. "You need to have some kind of Internet presence or Web site that is complementing your print product," Bengtson explains. "Three years ago, we started a Web site blog. They (the blog and print products) definitely have helped each other out.

"With a Web site, you reach a whole bunch of people you wouldn't ordinarily reach, and you might be able to lure some of them to your print product."



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3. Consider QR Codes. Quick Response (QR) codes have become a global phenomenon, and it wouldn't hurt publishers to look for creative ways to capitalize on their growing popularity, says Mark Avery of Grain Journal Publishing in Decatur, Ill. "You're starting to see more of these squiggly boxes," Avery says. "They give you a direct link to Web sites."

QR Codes are essentially stamp-shaped barcodes that can be read from QR readers, but also from smart phones. They are appearing on direct mail, public transportation, walking trails, artwork, and at trade shows, to name a few. This technology has been especially popular in Japan, South Korea and Europe, and it's picking up steam in the United States.

"When you put your smart phone over it, it takes a picture of it and takes you to its site," Avery says. "It's a new way for type to tie in with the Web. People should be looking into it."

4. Make friends. Publishers can prevent problems by establishing and maintaining strong communications with those they depend on to meet their objectives, Avery says.

He suggests starting with the people who distribute your product. "Have a good relationship with the post office. Get information any time you're trying



“YOU’RE STARTING TO SEE MORE OF THESE SQUIGGLY BOXES. THEY GIVE YOU A DIRECT LINK TO WEB SITES.” — Mark Avery

to do something special. Don't try to wing it."

Avery also recommends good relationships with your publisher's customer service representative. "You want to know what's going on," he says.

5. Keep up appearances. Publishers can enhance the look of their magazines with UV coatings, Avery says. The ultraviolet coats, made of transparent ink, protect covers and their images from fading and color changes from the sun. Not only do the coatings prevent problems, they enhance the overall appearance of the magazine. "It gives them a glossier look."

6. Stick to your budget. It is wise, Bengtson says, to remember the same principle that has been fueling endless battles in Congress this summer: the importance of spending within one's means. "If you're going to survive as a business, you need to work with what you have," he says. Accomplishing this objective calls for carving out the time to create a budget in the first place, setting goals and priorities and reviewing your spending plan frequently.

7. Set clear expectations. Kim Fernandez, the new editor of *The Parking Professional* magazine, works closely with publisher Henry Wallmeyer of the International Parking Institute in Fredericksburg, Va. She also is a long-time freelance writer. "From that perspective, I would say be as clear as you can when you talk to a

writer about an assignment," Fernandez says.

This approach ensures that publishers get the results they intended. An effective assignment will cover the sources you want quoted, the points of view you want and the overall scope of the piece.

"It's better to over-explain things. The same is true when working with photographers, graphic designers and printers. A lot of problems can be avoided this way."

8. Keep your balance. A healthy publication must maintain a balancing act between the editorial department's priorities and the goals of the advertising department, Fernandez continues. "Both will disagree. If you weigh too heavily on advertising content, no one will want to read your publication. If you weigh too heavily on editorial, you won't have enough advertising. It's important to find some middle ground."

9. Know your rights. It's also important, Fernandez says, for publishers to take care with copyright issues. She has heard of publications running into trouble after printing written material they weren't legally authorized to use. "Writers Google themselves a lot," she says. "Make sure you've researched who holds the rights to the material you want, and make sure you've secured the rights."

On the flip side, Fernandez adds, publishers should utilize contracts that clearly spell out what they're getting when they work with writers. "Make sure your contract specifies what rights you're purchasing."

Getting other publishers' perspectives is always worthwhile, Avery says, adding that he's looking forward to hearing the others' tips. He says his top suggestion goes without saying. "Work with Johnson Press of America." 

One on one

JPA profile: Julie Sutton, digital computer prepress specialist

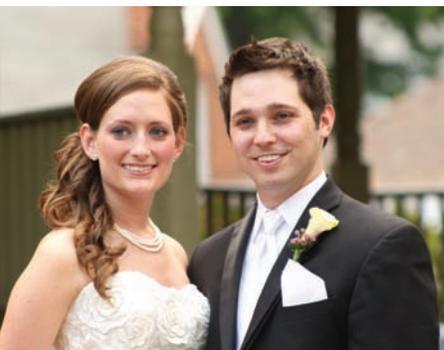
Number of years with JPA: 32

Why she loves JPA: "I've been part of this place since I was 6 years old," Sutton says. "My mother worked here, and the people here watched me grow up." Sutton started working for the company around the time she graduated from high school. "What I do today on the computer I used to do on the light table," says Sutton, who has distinct memories of the labor-intensive process of building up four-color pages by hand. "Over the years, they've been very kind to me. They've let me progress to the different stages. I have gotten so close to the people here." It has really become an extended family, and employees are now watching her generation's children grow up.

Family life: Sutton has two sons, 24-year-old Kyle and 22-year-old Casey. And earlier this year she gained a new daughter-in-law, Melissa, who met Kyle while they were in pharmacy school. The only child left in the house now is Shadow, Sutton's 15-year-old Maltese. The printing industry is an important part of Sutton's family legacy. Not only did her mother, Agnes Sutton, work as a typesetter for JPA, but also her father, sister and brother have worked in printing.



Kyle, Julie and Casey



Melissa and Kyle

Hobbies: An avid St. Louis Cardinals fan, Sutton loves picking on the many Chicago Cubs supporters in her midst. She also enjoys watching NASCAR, dirt track racing and, in recent years, has become a big reader. One of her favorite pastimes is watching classic movies. She has a large collection, from Doris Day and Rock Hudson romantic comedies to John Wayne flicks. Sutton also is a hostess at a local family-owned Italian restaurant. "I really love it because I get to meet people from all over the world," she says.

One cool fact: "When I was a child, I would walk the railroad tracks to Johnson Press to see my mother," Sutton recalls. "I used to knock on her office window to check in." Sutton says her sons have come to see her at work, too, but they are more likely to call her cell phone. 📞



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RECIPE

Strawberry Pretzel Dessert

2 2/3 cups crushed pretzels	1 small carton of Cool Whip
3/4 cup melted butter	2 cups of water
3 Tbsp. sugar and	2 (3 oz.) Strawberry Jell-Os
1 cup of sugar (separately)	16 oz. frozen strawberries
8 oz. softened cream cheese	

Make the bottom layer by mixing the pretzels, butter and sugar (3 Tbps.). Press the mixture into a 9x13 pan and bake at 350 degrees for 10 to 15 minutes. Let it cool. For the second layer, mix the cream cheese, sugar (1 cup) and Cool Whip together. Spread the mixture on the warm crust. Refrigerate it while you make the third layer. For the third layer, boil the 2 cups of water and the two Jell-O packages together, then add the frozen strawberries. Break the fruit up with a fork as it thaws. When it is thickened, pour the Jell-O mixture over the cream cheese layer. Refrigerate until completely set and then enjoy!

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