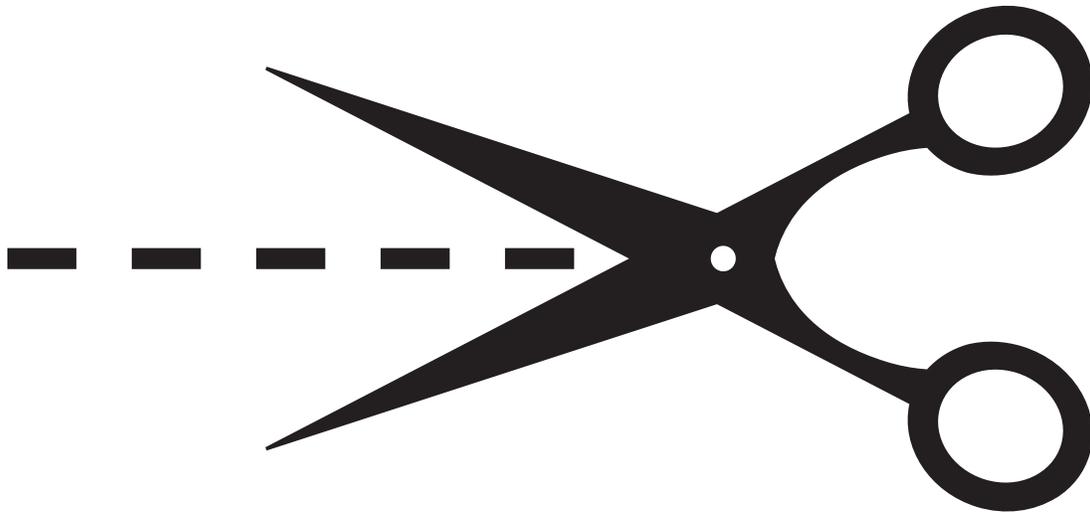


PRINT MATTERS

JOHNSON PRESS OF AMERICA • volume 9 • issue 3 • may 2015



Cut costs carefully

When clients ask publishing consultant David Sloan for advice on reigning in their magazine expenses, he usually points them toward their editorial expenses — with one caveat. Don't cut quality. "Unfortunately, they can cut muscle instead of fat," said Sloan, president of Sloan & Associates Publishing Consultants. "It's a balance. The person making the budget decisions really needs to work hand in hand with the editor, and possibly the designer."

Maintaining cost-effective publications without sacrificing quality always is a delicate balancing act, says Brooke Keane, founder and publisher of *West Suburban Dog*, a quarterly publication for dog enthusiasts with more than 30,000 readers. Keane wields the advantage of smaller publications — most staff members are volunteers or wear lots of hats. "I handle almost everything for the magazine myself, so that really cuts down on expenses," she says.

That, in turn, leaves her some room to pay for maintaining consistent quality. "Although getting the lowest possible price on products and services is great, it is better to get a good value for a fair price," Keane says. Sometimes, things are priced low for a reason! In the long run, you save money if you make quality purchasing decisions, be it with printers, writers, designers or copy editors.



Exceeding our customers' expectations for more than 60 years...

At *ForeWord Reviews*, a quarterly book review journal with approximately 7,500 readers, Publisher Victoria Sutherland tries to maintain the same balance. While smaller publications may have lower costs, they also have smaller budgets. "I wish we could raise our advertising rates on par with increases in postage and paper, but our ad base can't support that," she says.

Nevertheless, there are some things that are worth the expense. "We won't scrimp on lower quality paper or cover treatments," she said. "I strongly believe the reason we are still in business with a print journal is we continue to print magazines that feel like works of art and get passed along for years," Sutherland said.

But you can't have it all, so Sutherland keeps an eye on the number of pages in the magazine. "We do our best with limited page counts and squeezing every dime we can out of editorial and moving that content online," she says.

Keane takes a similar approach. "One challenge I've experienced is the necessity to make strategic changes when adding pages to the magazine. You have to think about the whole publication process — how everything works together."

What works

So what kind of cost-saving measures do make a difference? It depends on the publication, but Sutherland has made considerable budget cuts in the area of staff expenses. "We rely more and more on subcontractors, as opposed to hiring full-time employees," she said. "This keeps our overhead down and allows us to bring new and ever-changing talent into the mix, keeping our print and digital versions fresh."

Sutherland has applied this practice across her journal's departments. In editorial, for example, she assigns nearly 70 percent of the department's duties to subcontracted book reviewers and part-time editors. In the area of design, the journal hired a subcontracted art director to help the production manager with design. "It feels like we get three employees for the price of one," Sutherland said.

ForeWord Reviews also has been able to save significantly in the area of photography. "We have the unique



opportunity to use artwork from the books we cover in our publication," Sutherland said. "The customers are thrilled with the exposure."

When Keane suggests cutting editorial expenses, she also has personnel costs in mind, but publishers might also want to look at how much they're spending on photo shoots and even freelancer kill fees (paid to writers when their assigned articles aren't published).

But publishers can generally find "money leaks" across their organization if they take the time to look. For example, Sloan frequently advises publishers to avoid the temptation of creating their own apps. "Apps are the new trend today, but the reality of return on investment on apps is dismally bad," he said.

Other areas to look for fat, Sloan

said, could be your mailing practices, your choice of binding or your paper dimensions.

Minding your business

A number of the cost-savings strategies that work for small businesses in general apply to publications, too. For example, most small business owners find that it's easy to spend more than they realize, whether it's petty cash allotments or unexpected repairs. That's why documenting expenditures and revenue is worth the effort.

Consider setting a detailed budget for each production period. Not only can this tool help you avoid over-spending, it gives you a better idea of where you spend the most, and where you might need to make some adjustments.

It also makes sense to take advantage of free resources for advice and information. The Small Business Administration and the non-profit association SCORE, for instance, provide free business counseling and mentoring that literally cover all aspects of running a business. (<https://www.sba.gov> and www.score.org)

It's also helpful to examine your insurance costs. Assess your coverage annually to make sure your coverage matches your operation's needs. And remember, some professional organizations offer members insurance discounts.

Ultimately, if you take the time to look, you should be able to find spending you can reduce that won't hurt your publication's quality or appeal. "It's an interesting challenge, and it's one that everyone faces," Sloan said. "But there's almost always somewhere to cut costs." 

One on one

JPA profile: James Simmons, shipping and receiving clerk
Number of years with JPA: Four months, following multiple positions involving freight handling — including two years with UPS — and shipping

Why he loves JPA: “I’m enjoying the people and the atmosphere,” Simmons said, adding that some of the people he’s worked with in the past could be described as a bit “rough.” “Here, everyone’s friendly. And I enjoy doing the job. Some of it I know, and some I don’t know, like taking over the paper inventory. I like the challenge.”

Family life: Simmons and his wife, Lindsey Simmons, celebrated their seventh anniversary in April. They have two sons: Hudson, 5, and Talon, 2. As much as possible, the couple takes their children to the park and to the Discovery Children’s Museum in the Normal, Ill. area. Simmons also enjoys taking Hudson out to play basketball and soccer and spending time with Talon. “My 2-year-old is jabbering now, and it’s always fun to talk to him.”



Talon, James and Hudson



Talon, James and Hudson

of country music” has to tourists. “You could go to downtown Nashville any day of the year and meet someone from another country. It was worse during the CMA (Country Music Association) Music Festival, when the city was packed.” There was no telling who’d be in the city during those times. In fact, Simmons and his wife noticed Nicole Kidman and her husband Keith Urban at church one day. Their children were in the church nursery with the Simmons’ sons. 

Hobbies: Simmons loves to read everything from comic books to novels, but quiet reading time has gotten a bit scarce since he became a dad. “Dr. Seuss is really good, but you can only say the tongue-twisters so many times,” he said.

One cool fact: Simmons was born and raised in Nashville, Tenn. To him, it was just an ordinary city, but he was well aware of the appeal that the “home



Johnson Press of America
800 N. Court St.
P.O. Box 592
Pontiac, IL 61764

PRST STD
US Postage
PAID
Pontiac, IL
Permit No. 592

RECIPE

Grandma Joyce’s Rice Krispies Treats

1 cup of clear Karo syrup
1 cup of sugar
1 cup of peanut butter
1 tsp of vanilla
6 cups of Rice Krispies

Pre-measure the cereal so you will be able to quickly stir it into the mixture.

In a large pan, bring the syrup and the sugar to the start of a boil, and then remove the pan from the heat. Next, stir in the peanut butter and the vanilla, and then add the cereal. Spread it into a 9x13 cake pan and enjoy!

Johnson Press of America • 815.844.5161

For quotes, please contact:

Duane Carrell, ext. 235
duanecarrell@jppontiac.com

Randy Pennington, ext. 237
rpennington@jppontiac.com

Jill Rambo, ext. 234
jrambo@jppontiac.com

Tim Scarbrough, ext. 236
t.scarbrough@jppontiac.com

Randy Schwartz, ext. 239
r.schwartz@jppontiac.com