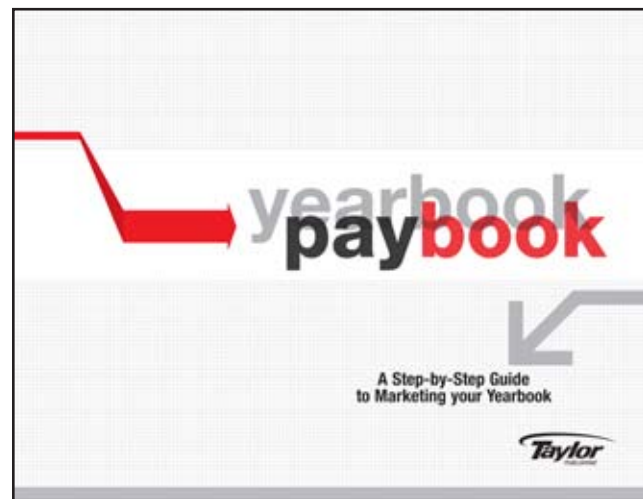


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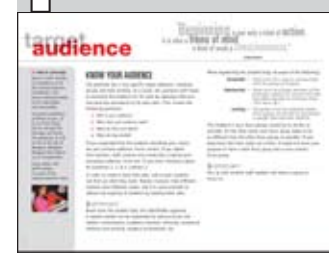
by Judi Coolidge
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Pay in. Pay out. Pay up. Pay back. If you think these words sound like a cadence for an aerobics exercise, take a deep breath. You are close.

Like a good exercise regimen, the “business” of yearbook involves a goal, a plan and discipline. If you don’t take care of business, or if you think someone else is going to take care of your business, the end result will be disappointing. So where do you start?

1 AUDIENCE



TARGET AUDIENCE

To achieve your sales goals, it is important that you know your target market inside and out. Selling yearbooks isn’t like selling toothpaste. Fortunately, your buyers are limited to a school and the community that supports it.

By connecting to identifiable segments of the student body, your staff will generate interest in the book and, at the same time, improve coverage of activities and events.

Key to making this happen is the Communications Coordinator. In order to open new avenues of communication, the Coordinator will monitor a system that’s created to exchange ideas and share information.



2 GROUPS



FOCUS GROUPS

The mantra of the real estate community is “location, location, location.” The mantra for your yearbook staff should be “focus, focus, focus.” (No, this is not an overview of the advancements in ADD treatments.)

Like all things yearbook, focus groups take time. Organizing and conducting a focus group session, however, is an assignment that reaps rewards.

Working in pairs, staff members target school groups and solicit their members’ opinions in a controlled environment. This prevents overreaction to one person’s opinion, as well as smug adherence to the way things have always been done. Focus groups are an invaluable resource.



3 PROMOTION



YEARBOOK PROMOTION

By the nature of their performances, athletes, actors and musicians are extremely visible. Also, there are clubs at your school that are extremely visible because they talk themselves up. Unfortunately, yearbook staffs are invisible. They emerge, almost apologetically, two or three times a year. It’s just not enough to establish a presence.

Self-promotion. These words are often preceded by “shameless.” OK then, it is time to engage in some shameless self-promotion about the yearbook. Start building a long-term reputation for your program by establishing trust and respect among students and teachers at your school. Tell them about the awards you’ve won, the workshops you’ve attended and fun you’ve had.



4 SUPPORT



STAFF SUPPORT

Organize your yearbook fan club and make sure your biggest fan is your principal. This page suggests things that you can do for your principal to engage him or her in your production. Your guidance department also needs to support the staff.

At McKinney HS, yearbook staff members created a **facebook** group called “Want to be in the MHS yearbook?” Within two days, more than 250 kids had joined the group. They post photos and respond to general questions. A first-year staff member, who is a senior, administers the group. This is a great place to publicize yearbook sales.



5 SALES



PRE-SALE

Think about it. You see commercials for movies weeks before they open. Why do they advertise ahead of time? Why not wait until the movie opens? By exposing the consumer to the product, they create a need. Hopefully, the need evolves into a craving. Anticipation of the opening is further fueled by previews.

It sounds good, but it is not easy. It takes effort, exposure and influence to convince students that they need a yearbook. Therefore, it is necessary to have a strong, creative plan to make students want what you have.



6 ENVIRONMENT



SALE ENVIRONMENT

Why not eavesdrop? By just paying attention to what students are saying, you can begin to discover what they really care about. Also, if you listen carefully, you will be able to capture the personalities of the students.

Yogi Berra’s off-handed remarks captured his personality to a tee. For example, Berra said, “Never answer an anonymous letter.” He also uttered the often repeated lament, “It ain’t over, ‘till it’s over.”

Demonstrate to your students that you are listening. Display the quotes that are gathered on a wall near the yearbook room and change the quotes every week.





Letreze Jordan
Middlesburg High School
Middlesburg, Florida

Brooke Batten
Terry Parker High School
Jacksonville, Florida

Being a yearbook adviser is rewarding and worthwhile. First, the students in journalism get to be creative, practice cooperation, learn collaboration, develop leadership skills and nurture a sense of camaraderie. One of the most rewarding parts of producing a yearbook is to see the looks of pride and amazement as the students realize that they were part of producing a timeless product. Besides that, the book itself is a tangible living memorial of a specific high school year, a memorial that lasts and lasts and lasts. I have attended my high school reunions and watched former classmates sharing, giggling, reliving and apologizing for what they see in their yearbook

OK, it's worth it because you get students every year who have a passion for publishing, writing and photography. They make it worth it. They wouldn't have this experience if there weren't a book for them to put together. It's worth it when it's everyone's story is told in some way or another. It's worth it because it teaches students self worth and the ability to do the impossible. We start with no money, sell to less than a quarter of our students and still make it happen without going into debt. Who does that? If that doesn't prepare students for success in the real world, then I don't know what does.



7 APPEAL
STUDENT APPEAL

Create student appeal by promoting your coverage. Students will not buy a book that excludes them. If they are included, tell them. Run the index every two weeks and post it outside the yearbook room. Have page editors contact students who are pictured and quoted on their pages. Also, share this information with parents. Mount your best photos and display them in the office, the media center or guidance office. Using a did-you-know format, reveal some of the fun facts that the staff uncovered while researching stories. Most important, don't keep what you do a secret.



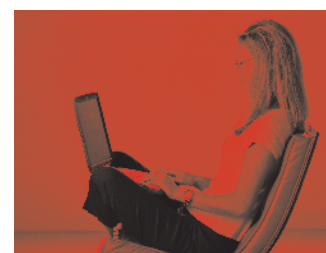
8 MESSAGE
SALES MESSAGE

Like any good advertising campaign, the yearbook needs to employ words and design to brand their product. In other words, when students see certain colors, a particular typeface and a catchy slogan, they should be reminded of the yearbook. Can you identify the stores associated with these slogans? "It's all inside"; "Expect more. Pay less"; "The stuff of life"; "Always low price. Always." If you guessed JC Penney, Target, Kmart and Wal-Mart, you are paying attention to the stores' messages. Now can you visualize any of the logos associated with stores? Now you are getting the picture.



9 PROMOTION
PRE-SALE PROMOTION

Believe it or not, people follow through on commitments. Therefore, have students sign a commitment to buy a book at registration or on the first day of school. Students like gains and abhor losses. Use that psychological predisposition to your advantage. Order a fully-loaded book for everyone. Then distribute forms allowing students to cancel the order or to delete extras, like name stamping, icons or **Yearzine**. Place reminders of the sale everywhere. In addition, run testimonials from teachers and alumni on your school's broadcast network or educational access channel.



10 SALES
SALE WEEK

We have a dangerous addiction to immediacy in our country. Instantaneously, the Internet offers a broad array of information, entertainment and products. Can you understand why students are reluctant to give us money for something they won't see for seven to nine months? The mere thought of delayed gratification sends the immediacy addict online to twitter. The yearbook needs to have a limited-time sale. Then they need to use social-networking sites to promote it. Brainstorm. Create a number of social media initiatives to start a viral marketing campaign.



11 FOLLOW-UP
FOLLOW-UP SALES

"OK, who hasn't bought a book?" Who knows? You should. It is time to MERGE & PURGE, so that you can separate the wheat from the chaff, the buyers from the non-buyers. Once you have accomplished this, you can target the non-buyers. Start by calling seniors and/or their parents. This is a group that often regrets not buying a yearbook when all is said and done. Explain that the yearbook is a limited edition offered for a limited time only. Divide the list of non-buyers among staff members and offer an incentive to sell.



12 PLAN
SALES PLAN

WiiFM. (Sound like a new Wii game?) "What's in it for me?" No one wants budget limitations to negatively impact his or her vision. By selling more books, you will make more money. Look over the sales initiatives and highlight the ones you wish to implement. After deciding, assign a staff member to coordinate each sales or PR assignment. The Communications Coordinator will track progress on each assignment. Careful planning, execution and follow-up of these sales initiatives are certain to result in financial gains. Take a moment and share the results of your merchandising practices with us. **CONTACT JUDI COOLIDGE** jcoolidge@taylorpub.com



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