EDITORIAL PRODUCTION DURING COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

Hotsheets

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Editorial production is a carefully laid out process that aids in the creation of a magazine issue from conceptualizing an issue and its theme, to executing the issue, to finalizing the correspondence, and getting the issue out to subscribers. During COVID-19 restrictions, this process can need a bit more attention and patience.

REVIEW YOUR EDITORIAL PRODUCTION SCHEDULE AND COMMUNICATION STYLE

Look over your production schedule as it is currently laid out. Are there any in-person meetings expected? How can these be moved to online and have the communication channels stay steady and open?

At *Room Magazine*, because our editorial collective lives in many different parts of Canada and the world, we are used to having online meetings and relying heavily on email to complete our production schedule when editing an issue. If your team is not used to working on an issue entirely online, then work with your team to integrate new online tools for communications. Online tools that work really well with editorial production are Slack, Trello, and Box. Be ready to have tutorials and learning sessions with your team if these tools are new to your process, as it will take a bit of patience but once everyone is on-board, the editorial production schedule can easily stay on track.

Even as you move online, ensure those team meetings are still happening. Whenever I edit an issue, I always update my editorial team with even the smallest details to ensure that they are aware of where we are in the process and if any changes have come up or if more collaboration is needed. It can also be a good idea to set a communications guideline for your editorial team. For instance, you can label emails to your team as "URGENT" or "NOT URGENT" and ask that team members respond to emails or inquiries within 48 hours or a timeline that is appropriate for your team.

CHECK-IN WITH YOUR PRINTER AND DISTRIBUTORS

You would likely be doing this throughout the editorial process anyway but as restrictions vary across the country, it is worthwhile to check-in with everyone to make sure there aren't any unexpected changes. Checking in with your printer early can ensure that your issue will be printed on time and getting a quote earlier than usual can ensure there won't be a paper shortage when you send in your final files.

Checking in with your distributors is also a great practice to get into while COVID-19 restrictions are still in place. There may be warehouses that can no longer house your upcoming issue or there may be stores that are staying closed longer than expected. Your distributors might also let you know about shipping delays which you can then let your subscribers know about, so they know to expect their next issue a bit later than usual.

FINALLY, COMMUNICATE CHANGES

Continual communications with your contributors is probably already a practice you have in the bag. However, with COVID-19 restrictions possibly slowing things down for your next issue, it's good practice to let your contributors know where the issue is in the editorial process. Contributors might be expecting their piece to be published at a certain time and might have it highlighted in a grant application, so checking in and informing your contributors of any delays in publishing their pieces will be helpful for them to make changes to any expectations they might have for their published piece.

It's also a good idea to ask your contributors their preference for payment. Generally, this payment will likely be in the form of a cheque, but if the contributor needs to go to a PO Box in a busy building, this will delay their getting paid. If your publication can move to e-transfers during COVID-19 restrictions, this will ensure your contributors can be paid in a timely manner without having to worry about their health or any risks.

Overall, your editorial production schedule may not change that much even with COVID-19 restrictions in place, however, making these changes might help as we move forward in publishing during uncertain times.