

# HOW TO TRANSITION INTO A NEW ROLE

## Hotsheets

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Transitioning to a new job or a new role can be a challenge for many, but it can also be a revealing opportunity: one that encourages reflection, change and new ways of moving forward with the organization. From learning on the job to improving workflow during the pandemic, these practices can ensure a smooth transition.

### GET YOUR GUIDANCE

Taking on the role of a predecessor can be bumpy. To **ensure continuity**, ask to **shadow the outgoing editor** via being bcc'd on emails for at least one entire issue to production. Take notes on workflow and create questions while you observe correspondence between various editors for the magazine, and between the outgoing editor and the writers they've commissioned.

If possible, create an opportunity to work with the outgoing editor as if you were a regular contributor. For example, when I was invited to be arts editor for *THIS* magazine, I asked the outgoing editor if I could write a profile and be edited by her to **experience the process** from both perspectives: as a writer and as an editor. This **dual perspective** encouraged empathy in my work as an editor and gave me a clear understanding of what's expected from both sides. When you're transitioning into a new role, don't be afraid to ask for guidance; make it work for you.

### WORKFLOW

How organized are you? While shadowing the outgoing editor, be proactive and create a list of questions for them. As the incoming arts editor, I divided my workflow questions into several categories:

#### 1. Access

How do I access the inbox, production schedule and website?

Get your login credentials and access to the production schedule as early as possible, so that you can familiarize yourself with the work as it meets various deadlines on its way to print.

#### 2. Centralize Access

Is there a hub, drive or folder where contacts, previous pitch guidelines, writers' rosters, the production schedule and contracts are stored?

Bookmark the hub if it exists. If it doesn't exist, ask the editors if they are interested in creating a centralized space for increased transparency in the organization and for ease of access, knowing that this would be more work for you in the short-term, but beneficial in the long run. Alternatively, if the information exists in bits and pieces, you may have to create your own centralized access through a designated folder in your bookmarks bar. Getting organized early sets the foundation for a streamlined work ethic that is goal-oriented, focused and habit-driven. It will also create room for you to be receptive to changes and ideas as they arise.

#### 3. Editorial Process

- How do you curate your ideas for each issue and where do you source them?
- How do you encourage writers from marginalized communities to get in touch and pitch to you?
- How do you work with new and student writers who may be less experienced?

- What if writers don't deliver?
- How do you balance content across regions?
- How do you respond to pitches (acceptances and rejections)?
- How many rounds of edits do you go through with each writer?
- When do other editors chime in?
- Who decides on the pictures to accompany each piece?
- Are there overlaps between other sections of the magazine and your own?

#### 4. Organize Email

Email is an efficient form of communication, but it can also become unwieldy through disorganization and a lack of focus. Choose not to compromise your time because of email by keeping it organized:

- **Create labels for each issue**, so that you're able to keep track of the articles and writers assigned to each issue. Using labels means you won't have to use the search bar to find a pitch, a question, a draft or any fact-checking materials like transcripts and audio files. To stay organized, make it a habit of labelling emails even before you've finished reading them.
- **Use email threads for each step of the editorial process.** If you have to share the fact-checking materials with another editor, email them all in one thread with a clear subject line. Same with lineups for each issue, as well as final drafts. This saves everybody from rooting around their inboxes.
- **Be transparent.** When responding to pitches or to queries, be transparent about your expectations: How many words are needed? How much will they get paid? What is the first deadline? Including this information in your first contact will not only save you a string of emails but will also develop trust with your writers because of transparency.

## WORKSPACE

### 1. Take Back Your Working Hours with Organizational Tools

For those of us working from home, the pandemic may have dissolved the structure of our days, blurring boundaries between work, rest and sleep. To take back your working hours, consider using an organizational tool (such as the free productivity template in Trello) to break down various tasks for each day and assign a certain number of hours to them. Assign time for your errands and your time off, too: schedule a walk, an hour to listen through your favourite album or a grocery trip.

### 2. Create Boundaries Through Ceremony

If you want privacy and live in a space shared with others, or if you want to create stronger boundaries, consider buying a partition or curtain, or lighting incense before you begin your work. Creating this kind of ceremony alerts you to the beginning of a task, which can be effective for strengthening routine and boundaries. The same can be achieved with a plant if you're a plant person. To make space where there looks like there might be none, clear it out, add a plant, bring some incense, draw a curtain.

