

Production: from ideas to paper



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Agenda

- Design and production in-house vs. contracted
- Choosing a good designer
- How to get the best from your printer



Design and production
in-house vs. contracted

Design and production in-house vs. contracted



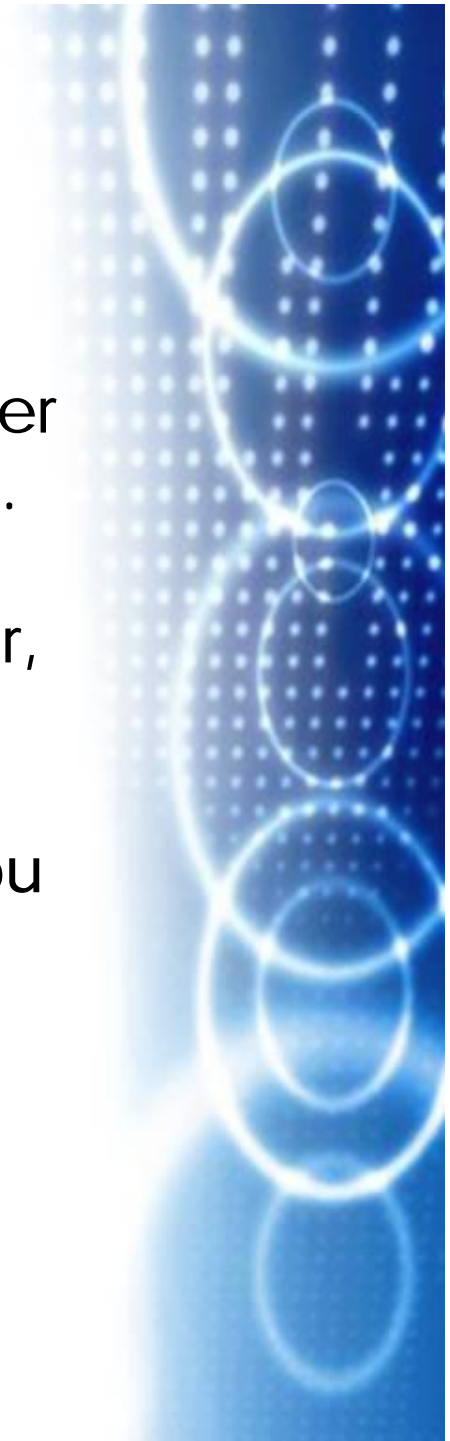
Design and production in-house vs. contracted



Ask the big questions first

Firstly, there is no single right or wrong answer to the question of in-house vs. contracted.

But it is a fundamental question to consider, with wide-reaching implications for your business structure, working capital requirements and the type of company you are (or wish to become).



Issues to Consider

- The physical work environment
- Is there the space for a designer or studio team?
 - How will this impact existing staff and other expansion plans?
- Is it the right sort of “creative environment” that will attract the right sort of staff?
- Proximity to key editorial colleagues



Issues to Consider

- Financial requirements
- Maintaining a studio – or even one Mac – can be an expensive business.
 - The machines are expensive
 - The software is expensive
 - The IT support can be expensive
 - Expect to pay a min. \$20,000 per person p.a. on top of salary to cover overheads and associated G&A costs.
- Do you have the resources (time and sufficient working capital) to set up an in-house design dept/studio?

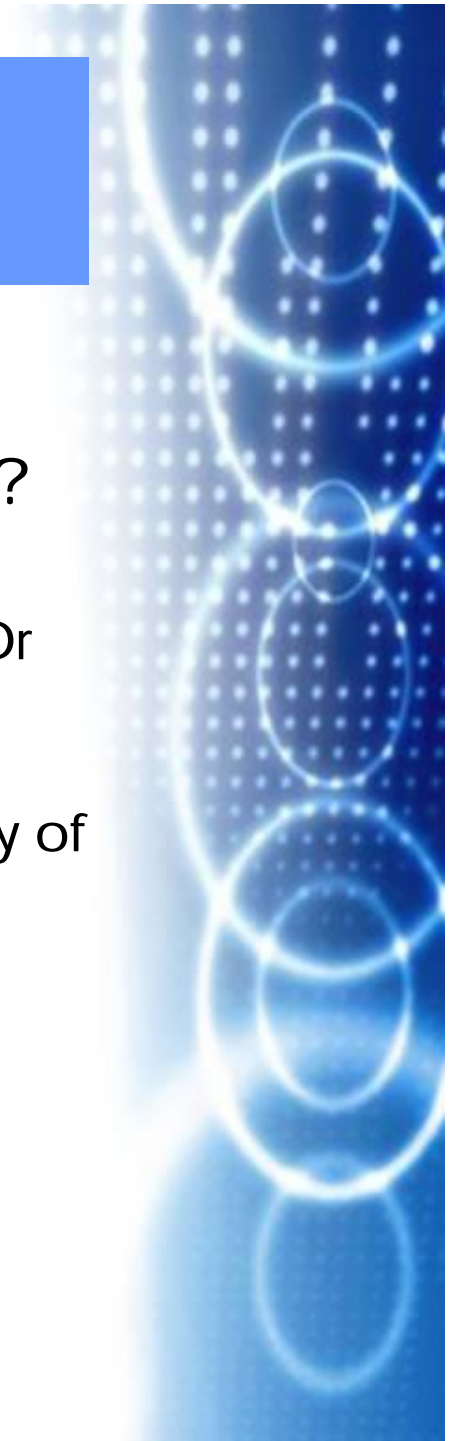


Issues to Consider

- Align HR strategy with business strategy
- Ask the question; What business are we in?
What business do we want to be in?
 - Are you in the magazine publishing business? Or are you in business of helping to solve the communication needs of your clients by connecting buyers with sellers through a variety of different channels?



Design and production in-house vs. contracted



Issues to Consider

- Can you help clients with case studies, white papers, web sites, custom publishing, newsletters and other corporate communications?
- Should in-house design expertise be a strategic driver and a point of differentiation from your competitors?
- Is it appropriate to think of design as a revenue stream; Offering design services to clients can help build stronger relationships with clients, as well as diversifying revenue streams away from advertising.
- Not for everyone and may be best to “stick to your knitting”. If design work is not up to standard then can affect overall relationship between client and publisher.



Outsourced design advantages

- Outsourcing to a freelancer (or design company)
 - Easier setup to get started
 - Can scale up and down according to demand
 - Reduced overheads (and possibly cheaper overall)
 - Utilise technology to your advantage; PDF workflows, FTP sites and high-speed internet make outsourcing design a viable option off-site, in another suburb, another city, or even in another country!



Outsourced design advantages

- Outsourcing to a design company
 - Greater flexibility: If outsourcing to a design company (as opposed to a freelancer/sole trader) you don't have to worry about staff absences/leave, or any additional short-term or one-off publications, as extra design resource is available.
 - And if you don't like a particular designer's work, you can ask for another to be assigned, eg any staff performance issues aren't your problem!
 - Also, extra hands available during deadlines (but you pay for them!) and senior art directors available for original/conceptual work and for advice when needed.



Outsourced design disadvantages

- Harder to incorporate last-minute changes and can be expensive eg. Can't change a cover or opening spread concept at the last minute without being charged again to do a new one.
- More difficult – but not impossible – to ensure effective communication. Briefing involves either complicated emails/ftp files, phone calls or a drive down to the designer's office. Reviewing work involves PDFs, then scribbling on the page and scanning it and emailing or couriering back, often with emails and/or phones calls, a slow process especially if more than one person has to sign off
- Lack of oversight and review – robust systems are essential!



Outsourced design disadvantages

- A freelance designer may not feel that they have as much at stake, or the same sense of 'ownership' that an in-house magazine designer would have. Also more difficult to build a sense of team, with other employees (editorial, sales, admin) sharing in the excitement of the creative process
- Not as conducive to collaboration. Less opportunity for back-and-forth exchange of ideas and designer is not privy to any general editorial conversations about stories etc.



In-house design advantages

- Improved communication. During the cut and thrust of deadline week, the editor/designer hub is the engine-room of the magazine. The interplay between editor and designer is crucial and this works best face-to-face
- Retain full creative control in-house, improved productivity (often) and an increased sense of a whole team contributing to the creation of the magazine (can have a positive impact on overall company morale)



In-house design advantages

- Better continuity – your freelance designer might get another bigger or better paying client. Or they might have scheduling conflicts or go on holiday at a time that suits them, but not you. In short, your magazine may not be their top priority.
- Can hire specifically for the skill-set required in the role (eg print *and* web design, magazine design only, magazine design *and* production management etc)



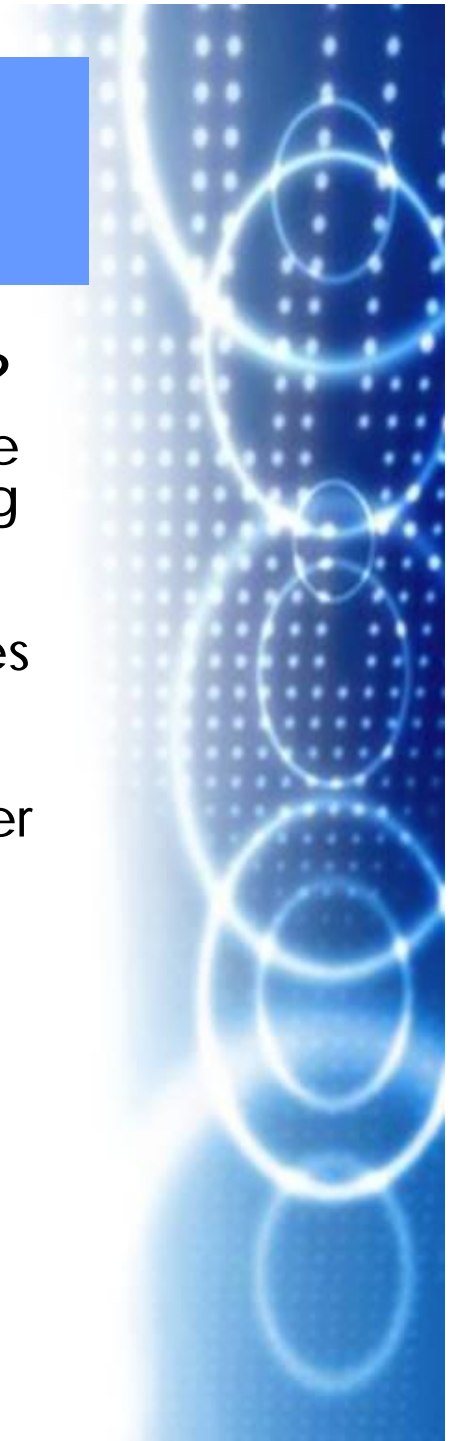
In-house design disadvantages

- Administrative and HR overheads (hidden costs)
- Can get a “sameness” to the look and feel of your stable of magazines
- Lack of other designers to bounce ideas off and peer review (if sole-charge position)



A third way?

- Can you have your cake and eat it too?
 - Is an in-house design resource, with freelance design to cover peaks an option? Or bringing a contract designer in-house for deadline day/week? This requires a spare production workstation for them to work from, so removes one of the key cost saving benefits.
 - For heavily templated magazines, outsource production portion to Mac Operator (at lower cost) but leave art direction in-house.
 - Some magazines might be better suited to outsourcing (e.g. bi-monthly or quarterly) where a full-time staff member is not justified



Choosing a good designer

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Choosing a good designer



Choosing a good designer

- Magazine design is a very specific skill within the overall design discipline.
- I have worked with some fantastic freelance designers, whose corporate ID and brand work was absolutely top-notch. But they couldn't design a magazine to save their life.
- A good magazine designer needs to know how to work well with an editorial team and needs to be in tune with the target audience.
- A good magazine designer needs to be an expert in typography, colour and the use of space. Great magazine design is not about cramming as much information onto a page as possible. More often than not, less is more.



One person, multiple positions

- One person/multiple positions?
- Art direction, layout, arranging photo shoots, sourcing stock images, colour correcting and photoshop work, illustration (or hiring illustrators), controlling a contributors budget, designing and producing marketing and sales collateral, dealing with pre-press/printers, technical troubleshooting, archiving and back-ups.
- As business owners or publishers or managers, we ask a lot of a small one or two person design studio! It may be a better option to outsource in order to gain specific expertise where it is required.



One person, multiple positions

- Make sure you hire the right skills for the specific requirements of the position and how the position will integrate with the rest of the publishing team. For example, will the designer be expected to manage the contributors budget for artwork and hire photographers/illustrators? Or will the editor be responsible for this? Will they need to manage other designers/studio staff or is it a sole-charge position?
- Make sure you designer has good contacts and strong relationships with photographers, illustrators and freelance designers



How to get the best from your
printer

How to get the best from your printer

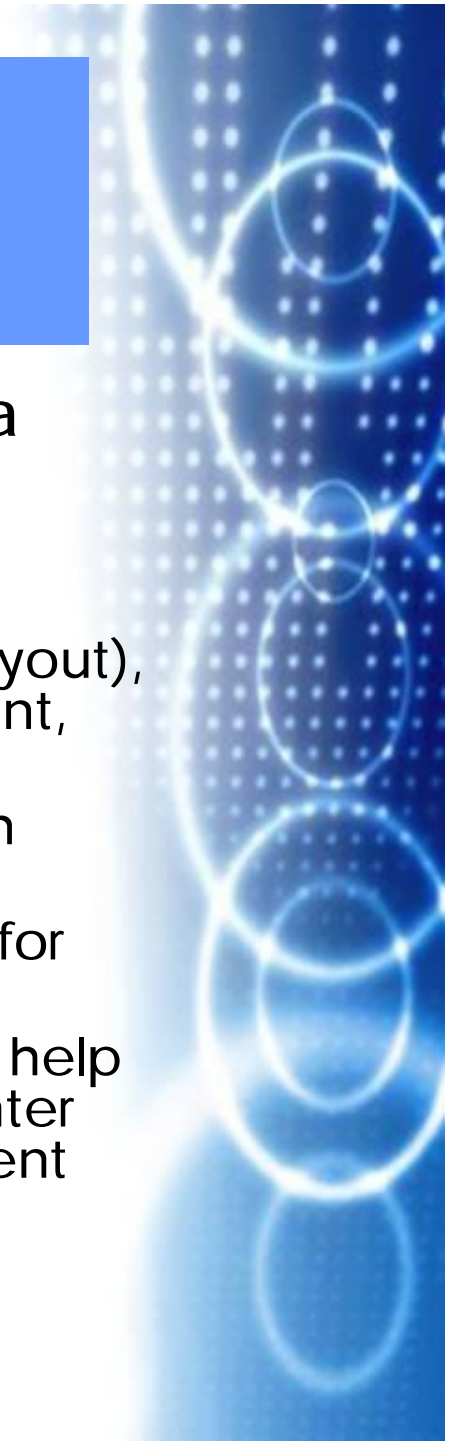


How to get the best from your printer



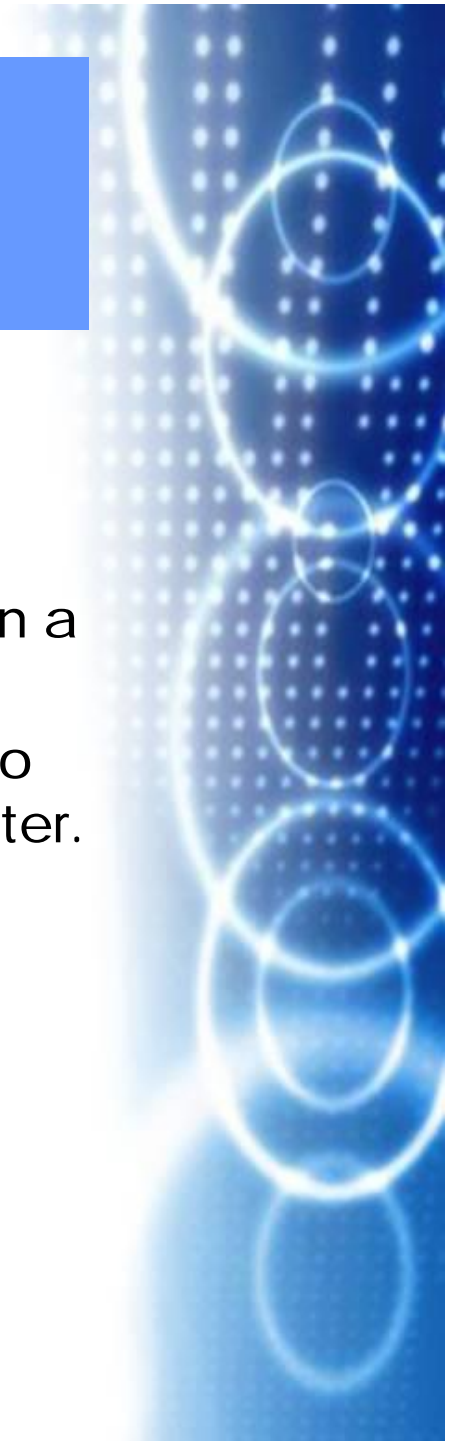
How to get the best from your printer

- Think of your printer as a partner, not just a supplier
 - Credit terms
 - Pre-press (photography, scanning, retouching, photoshop work), production artwork (page layout), workflow automation, digital asset management, archiving
 - Some offer distribution, fulfilment and despatch services
 - Web services (CMS etc). Repurposing content for multiple applications
 - ...and ideas! What services can they offer that help generate extra revenue or reduce costs! A printer can help with creative solutions to 'special' client requests.



How to get the best from your printer

- Assistance with choosing papers
 - Lock in annual contracts based on firm commitments.
 - Consider partnering with other small publishers on a “house stock” for volume/price discounts.
 - Consider changing format if this will bring you into line with other magazines produced by your printer. In so doing you may be able to benefit from economies of scale in terms of bulk purchase of paper at a specific sheet size.



How to get the best from your printer

- Negotiate printing contracts early
 - It's an ultra-competitive market and printers will come to the negotiating table. It's not just about price either. Negotiating 60 or 90-day terms, or shorter lead times/turn-around times might be more important for you than screwing the printer down for the last dollar, or compromising on your choice of paper stock.
- Make sure you are doing regular cost-analysis on the print bill!
- Work with your printer to streamline pre-press and workflow
 - Do you need contract proofs for every page? Will soft-proofing suffice? (Time and \$ saving)



How to get the best from your printer

- Ensure you have comprehensive contract to cover all likely scenarios for differing folios and print runs
 - Gatefold covers
 - Special colours/finishes
 - Will printer “bonus” anything?
- Significant paper price rises forecast in 2009
 - Get negotiating now! Committing to a fixed term and fixed rate agreement will protect you from incremental price rises during 2009.



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Questions



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