

Team Up!

Who Will Produce the Newspaper?

A student newspaper—like any newspaper you buy on a newsstand—is no better or worse than its staff. Whether print or electronic, a good student newspaper has a staff that is well-trained, organized and motivated.

In addition to a staff of students, almost all student newspapers at the middle or secondary school level have a faculty adviser. Most often the adviser is an English or journalism teacher, though any faculty member with an interest in newspapers or current events can be successful.

This section will focus on getting the best people you can get, and getting their best from them. It can help you organize your student newspaper. And if you're exploring newspapers as a class unit, it will help you understand how newspapers work.

The Key Players

FACULTY ADVISER

If you can think of the student newspaper staff as a tribe, the faculty adviser is not the chief, but an elder to whom the tribesmen turn for advice.

If you can think of the newspaper staff as a football team, the faculty adviser is the kind of coach who encourages the quarterback—the student editor-in-chief—to call the plays.

The faculty adviser to a student newspaper is a goad and a guide, a critic and a counselor, a confidant. He or she sets the standards high enough to require real effort, then strives every day to sustain the enthusiasm.

The school administration will hold the adviser responsible for the student newspaper, though the adviser should actively assume responsibility only when convinced that the student editor-in-chief has abused it or dropped the ball.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The success of the student newspaper is largely the responsibility of the editor-in-chief.

The editor-in-chief is in charge of producing the paper, but he/she must delegate many tasks to the managing editor and to the assigning editors.

The editor-in-chief sets newspaper policy, but not by decree. He/she must lead in a way that staff members are willing and able to follow.

If the student newspaper is to run with a minimum of internal friction, the editor-in-chief and the faculty adviser must have a close working relationship characterized by mutual trust and open communication.

The editor-in-chief conducts the story conferences at which the assigning editors discuss stories to be assigned for the next issue. The editor-in-chief keeps a master story list for each issue, making sure that the assigning editors are not duplicating efforts, and that the stories will result in a newspaper that covers all the bases.

The editor-in-chief may write the newspaper's editorials, but on

most student newspapers editorial opinion is formed by consensus of an **EDITORIAL BOARD** made up of all of the editors. The editor-in-chief may double as editor of the opinion page(s), or an **OPINION EDITOR** may be assigned this task.

Note: Some student newspapers have eliminated the positions of editor-in-chief and managing editor in favor of an **EDITORIAL BOARD** that not only determines editorial opinion but makes all major decisions about newspaper policy and format. Management by committee spreads around the executive experience, but it can fall short in coordination of day-to-day operations.

MANAGING EDITOR

The managing editor is the editor-in-chief's top aide. When the editor-in-chief has laid out a plan, it is the job of the managing editor to see that things go according to plan. The managing editor rides herd, keeps tabs, follows up and finds out why.

While the editor-in-chief concentrates on the content of the paper, the managing editor takes charge of production, overseeing the transformation of content into copies of a polished, professional-looking publication—or an exciting electronic product.

The managing editor makes sure that production takes place on time and under budget.

ASSIGNING EDITORS

Most student newspapers have several assigning editors, each with a well-defined area of responsibility.

The assigning editors are members of the paper's management team. They work for and with the editor-in-chief and managing editor.

(If the paper is run by an Editorial Board, the assigning editors usually are members of the board.)

The roster of assigning editors normally includes a **NEWS EDITOR**, a **FEATURES EDITOR**, a **SPORTS EDITOR** and a **GRAPHICS EDITOR** or **PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR**. It may also include an **OPINION EDITOR** if the editor-in-chief does not serve in this role.

The assigning editors are in charge of assigning reporters, photographers and artists, and editing their work. Most student newspapers do not have **COPY EDITORS** to double-check grammar, spelling and punctuation—so the assigning editors double as copy editors.

Editorial opinions usually begin with a basic outline agreed upon by the editorial board. The writing of the editorial may routinely fall to the editor-in-chief or the opinion editor, or it may be rotated among the editorial board members.

Some student newspapers assign one person, the **LAYOUT EDITOR** or **DESIGN EDITOR**, to handle page layout for the entire publication. In some cases, layout is assigned to the managing editor. In other cases, the news editor, features editor, sports editor and opinion editor each lay out their own pages.

Great things
can happen when you
work as a team.



Wanted!

BUSINESS MANAGER

Every student newspaper needs to have someone taking care of business.

The business manager is the paper's treasurer. In consultation with the faculty adviser and editor-in-chief, all money matters funnel through the business manager.

If the paper sells advertising space, the business manager may double as the **ADVERTISING MANAGER**, or may have an advertising manager reporting to him or her. The advertising manager plans sales strategy and oversees the students who sell ads, design them, and decide their placement on the newspaper's pages.

The business manager also may double as the **CIRCULATION MANAGER**, or may have a circulation manager reporting to him/her. If copies of the paper are to be sold, the circulation manager determines how, where and when, and oversees the salespeople. If copies of the paper are given away, he/she oversees the distribution.

REPORTERS

Reporters and photographers provide the creative power for your student newspaper. Without them, there would be no material to print.

Some student newspapers have separate reporting staffs for news and features; others pool reporting talents and encourage staffers to write both. If beats are assigned, such as covering the Student Council, plan to rotate them frequently. A student newspaper is a place to gain broad experience.

The only specialized reporting that seems necessary at the school level is sports reporting. Knowledge of the sport is important for adequate reporting on a sporting event.

Reporters share with editors the responsibility for coming up with story ideas. They keep eyes and ears open, noting changes at the school, concerns expressed by fellow students and coming events.

PHOTOGRAPHERS

A student newspaper needs at least one photographer; more is better. Good photography adds an important dimension to news coverage, and it makes the newspaper much more appealing to readers.

In the unlikely event that a student photographer can't be recruited for the staff, consider buying a simple-to-operate 35mm camera for reporters to share. You may not get the consistent high quality you hope for, but at least you will have pictures.

If the newspaper has a photography editor, the news, features and sports editors will funnel requests for photo illustration through that person.

GRAPHIC ARTISTS

A student newspaper needs at least one graphic artist, for the same reasons it needs a photographer. Graphic artists can illustrate some things a photographer can't with maps, charts and drawings. And with the range of new desktop computer programs, graphic artists can design the paper in a way that gives it individuality and life. Graphic artists also are essential for creating the kind of advertisements that will draw merchants to your paper.

SALESPEOPLE

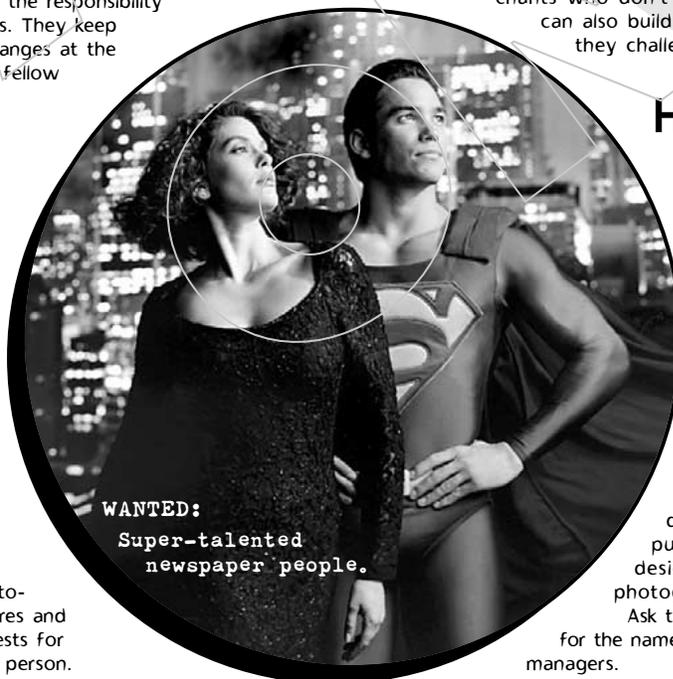
If your newspaper sells advertising, it needs advertising salespeople.

Salespeople may want to do market research and train themselves in the techniques of selling. They can build sales skills just as reporters build reporting skills: by studying the craft and by practicing what they learned.

Student newspapers may be called upon to create ads for merchants who don't provide them ready-made. Salespeople can also build copywriting and graphic design skills if they challenge themselves to create these ads.

CHECK THE NEWS

Pro sports teams are like the staffs of newspapers or businesses. And there are different ways they can be put together. Look in the Sports section for stories about your favorite pro team. How was it put together? Were the players hired (drafted) young and developed? Or were they brought in from outside? Stage a class debate arguing the benefits of each approach.



WANTED:
Super-talented
newspaper people.

How to Recruit

If your school has a journalism class, that's where most of your staffers should come from.

If your school does not have a journalism class, English teachers can give you the names of students who are talented writers. If those teachers taught a unit on newspapers, they could tell you which students showed particular interest.

You might also contact social studies teachers for the names of students displaying a keen interest in current events.

Ask the art teachers to recommend students who could illustrate stories, draw cartoons or take photographs. Computer teachers can lead you to computer designers. A photography club can provide photographers.

Ask the business, accounting and math teachers for the names of students who might be able business managers.