

Things to Do - An Adviser's First 30 Days

Here's my annual list to get started on a successful year. New advisers in particular should find the information helpful. August and September are the key months to accomplish many tasks that will insure the year runs smoothly and that deadlines are met. Now is the time to:

- 1) **Find and sort all yearbook supplies into 3 piles** - I know what these are and I need them, I have no idea what these are for, or I know what these are and I don't need.
- 2) **Make arrangements to attend workshops** - new advisers or student workshop, Register as soon as possible.
- 3) **Organize and clean up the yearbook room** - discard old junk, put very old yearbooks away in boxes, and give yourself some working room.
- 4) **Take a tour of "Yearbook Avenue"** - there's all sorts of help on the site. Set up passwords for your students, and guard your own password, big time!
- 5) **Work on the ladder diagram**, which lists the contents of each page - it sets the direction for your whole work schedule. After you get it done, decide which pages are targeted for each deadline, aiming for more pages than needed for the first couple of deadlines. Target pages for the first **two** deadlines. If your first deadline is for 30 pages, aim at 36 or 38 total pages. Overplan so you can overproduce.
- 6) **Gather lists** - alpha of each class, list of teachers and what they teach, counselors, custodians, etc. Also gather schedules for all sporting events, etc. so you know when you can take pictures needed for the book.
- 7) **Check your deadline dates versus your school calendar** - compare to vacations, when grades are due, etc. and realize trouble spots early. Be sure you are aware of when and which pages are due.
- 8) **Sell ads** - First target those who bought ads last year, then parents of seniors for congratulatory ads, and "connections" where staff members and students have jobs.
- 9) **Sell books** - "Back to school" time is the best time to sell yearbooks. School spirit is highest and students and parents expect to purchase desired school items. Plan a follow-up letter to non-buyers after your initial campaign.
- 10) **Finalize last year's finances.** Find out how you sit financially versus a year ago.
- 11) **Critique last year's book and methods**, the final product and also how the production cycle flowed to get it published. Target the book's worst sections for improvement, and fix whatever problems you had with regard to accomplishing the task.
- 12) **If your books arrive in last summer or fall**, finish distribution.
- 13) **Make contact with your professional photographers** - senior and underclass - and be sure they are scheduled and you know about their systems and timetables. Discuss portrait deadlines, print size and head size of senior images, coverage of key events, and the taking of underclass mugs, re-take procedures and turnaround time. "Push" them to get you the CD as soon as possible after re-take day.
- 14) **Pick out your type faces** from the printed sample in your Kit, then add those fonts to your site under "Plan/Fonts". You can add more later if needed.
- 15) **Try to do a few pages**, practicing on the computer. Once you learn how to do 8-10 pages, doing the rest is much easier.
- 16) **Get as many as digital images as quickly as possible**, and make sure that the photos are usable. Teach the kids about closeness, holding the camera steady, etc. You'll need academic shots, pix of administrators and staff, major and minor fall sports, informal candid, shots in the library, commons, cafeteria, parking lot, hallways, etc. Shoot sports early in the season, and be sure to get great coverage of more than Homecoming.
- 17) **Possibly plan a "Picture Day"**. All students in the building can bring their cameras and shoot candid. Explain and encourage the whole school to upload images to "Replay It". Getting the whole school involved is a great way to get some "free" candid and promote yearbook excitement.
- 18) **Be sure your computer is also organized**. Get rid of old files and digital images from last year. Work out a system of where you will store page design files, and how you will arrange digital images so you can easily locate them.
- 19) **Prepare a flyer** for later use that you will attach to each underclass portrait package that goes home to parents, once you get them. Staple these flyers only to the "non-buyers" of books, reminding parents that they should purchase a yearbook as soon as possible. It's a simple task, it reaches the right audience, and has very little hassle or cost.
- 20) **Online Sales, Ad Sales, and Student Info** - Contact Mike Berschback to help you set up online yearbook sales, add info to your school's web site and links to other yearbook info on our sites, set up a portal where parents can pay for their ads online, and upload your school master lists. Getting that main student data base list is a huge starting point.
- 21) **Speak with us about cover options.** The sooner, the better.