

Meeting Deadlines

Step # 1 Planning and attitude are the the Keys!

I would guess that if the schools who've missed their deadlines most, have one thing in common, it's not having a finalized ladder early in the year.

Finalize your ladder before school starts! Once you do, barring any unforeseen circumstances, like a championship team you want to give more pages to or a club that ceases to exist, stick to it.

Once you have your ladder done, that's when you decide which pages will go in on each deadline. The best way to do this is to color code your ladder.

Remember as you make up your ladder, if you want to keep color as inexpensive as possible, keep all your color inside signature or multiple boundaries.

Also—have a good attitude towards deadlines. It scares me when advisers and editors ask me, “What happens when we miss a deadline?” It's almost like they are expecting to fail and miss one. Plan to meet them all!

Step # 2 In Living Color

Once you get your ladder finished, one of the best things you can do early in the year is to figure out which pages will go in on each deadline.

In the early fall, probably before school starts, the plant will send you your deadlines. The deadlines they send you are only your black and white page deadlines. Your rep and you will decide on your color deadline. But this summer you can pretty well figure that the color deadline will be pretty much what it was last year.

Get yourself some “highlighter” type markers. Using a wall chart ladder, start by highlighting the pages you will be sending in on your first color deadline. This one is the most important because missing it can not only make your book late, but can also cost you money.

Next, use another color to highlight the pages you will want to send in on your final deadline. Yes, your final deadline comes next. These are pages that we call “have to waits”. The spring sports, spring activities and index pages are the ones we usually think of as final pages.

Then work your way back to the next to final deadline, and then your second, and finally your first black and white deadline. Each time you decide what pages will be sent for a particular deadline, highlight them with a particular color.

I will also recommend that you take the color coding one more step and make sure that at the beginning of the year you fill out a page envelope for every page in the book. These can be kept in a box, in page number order and given to staffers as they start work on it. They should be labeled with the page number, job number and school name and also have a note stating what the page topic is. This info comes from the ladder. That's why it's so important to do your ladder early. In the top right hand corner of the envelope mark a stripe that matches the color code from the ladder.

Meeting Deadlines

Step # 3 Be a Phony!

Know your deadlines!

Remember that if your deadline is December 1 10th, then that means that your pages are due in the plant on December 10th. It doesn't mean that you mail them on December 1 10th or that you have them postmarked on December 1 10th, but that they arrive at the plant on December 10th.

Which means that once you get your black and white deadlines from the plant and your color deadlines from your rep, decide what your staff deadlines will be.

Traditionally, staff deadlines are a little different from plant deadlines. Many advisers and editors routinely set their staff deadlines ahead of their plant deadlines. (It is OK to tell them that your plant deadlines are a few weeks before the real dates. But if you do this, let your rep know so that if the kids ask them when their next deadline is, they can give them the right answer.)

Step # 4 3 Big Tools

1 If I could have only three organizational tools for yearbook, these are the three that I always find most helpful:

The page envelope. Yes, the simple page envelope. If you will go to the trouble to fill these out at the beginning of each school year, put them in a box in page number order, color code them for each deadline, and hand them out to staffers as they begin working on these pages, you will find them to be some of the best organizers around.

As you go through the year, any time you find a photo that pertains to that page, instead of filing it in a drawer where you will have to search for it later, place it in the correct page envelope. For example, if your Honor Society builds a float for Homecoming and you get a photo of it, drop that photo into the Honor Society page envelope as soon as it's printed.

Also, the page envelope along with my second useful item, can be the tracking item that takes you through page composition.

2 The Check-Off list. A copy is attached. Type one up that fits your staff (make it as specific as possible) and staple it to the front of the page envelope. Then, as people work on pages, require that they check off the steps that they have completed.

Advantages are many. One, you can always tell how each page is doing. Just pull out the page envelope and see where the checks are. Two, if the staffer working on a particular page is sick or leaves school for any reason, it's easier for another staffer or the editor to pick up the page and finish it. And three, it's a good way to keep tabs on how each staffer is doing. You'll notice that the list has 21 items. Tell your staff that a DPS should take a maximum of three weeks to complete and that they should be checking off at least seven items each week.

Meeting Deadlines

More of #4

3 Post-It Notes™. Get tons of them! Buy plain yellow ones. Get funny ones. But have lots of them! First, they can be used for writing photo captions. As soon as they get a photo, staffers should jot down the who, what, when, where, why and how for that photo on a Post-It Note™. Then attach it to the back of the photo.

Second, as deadlines approach, section editors should go through each page envelope and write down exactly what needs to be done on a Post-It Note™ and attach it to the outside of the envelope. That will act as a flag that those pages still need work. It works ! It really does! Try IT!

One Final Word

When you finally get to that final deadline, make a big deal about it when you make it. And always remember that the final deadline is the most important deadline. Especially if you have lots of signatures to complete with those pages.

There are tons of things we can not do with your previously submitted pages without completed signatures or multiples. So meet this deadline!

But after you do meet it, have a party, have a blast, take a trip, eat a pizza. I guarantee that next to getting married and seeing my two kids born meeting my final deadline the first year I was an adviser was the biggest day of my life that far!

Left Page # _____

Right Page # _____

Subject: _____

This checkoff list is a detailed map to doing a double page spread for non-Yeartech schools. As you complete each step put your initials in the space to the left. For Yeartech schools substitute computer file for Final Layout form.

- _____ 1. Decide what and who will be on the pages and put it on a mini FINAL LAYOUT FORM.
- _____ 2. Order photos using photo order form. Give to photo editor.
- _____ 3. Do full size FINAL LAYOUT FORM planner. Have it approved by section editor.
- _____ 4. Write body copy. (The story) Have it checked and proofed.
- _____ 5. Receive photos back from Photo Editor. Cut down or crop to size.
- _____ 6. Attach job stamps to all photos, make sure they are numbered.
- _____ 7. Write captions and idents. Get approval from section editor.
- _____ 8. Write headlines. Get them approved by section editor.
- _____ 9. Get FINAL LAYOUT FORM form from adviser or editor.
- _____ 10. Fill out identification part of FINAL LAYOUT FORM. (at bottom)
- _____ 11. Redraw layout from FINAL LAYOUT FORM planner to FINAL LAYOUT FORM.
- _____ 12. Indicate placement of all copy, captions and photos
- _____ 13. Print headline on FINAL LAYOUT FORM.
- _____ 14. Type copy and captions on COPY SHEET(S).
- _____ 15. Recheck crop marks on FINAL LAYOUT FORM and photos.
- _____ 16. Recheck all photos for job stamp info.
- _____ 17. Get page envelope for FINAL LAYOUT FORM and fill out ID info on outside
- _____ 18. Put all photos, the FINAL LAYOUT FORM and COPY SHEET(S) in envelope. Give to section editor.
- _____ 19. Section editor puts on any special instructions.
- _____ 20. Give to editor in chief and adviser for final check and signature.
- _____ 21. Send to Jostens! **ON TIME!!!**