

# moving up the masthead



Magazine Publishers of America

Advancing Your Career in Magazines



**Framework** for Success

**Recommendations** on Getting Ahead  
in Each Magazine Department

**Tips** for Advancement



Whether you're on the business or editorial side, a career in magazine publishing is full of exciting possibilities.

Visit [www.magazine.org](http://www.magazine.org) for the latest career advice and resources.

If you have been in your position for a few years, and are ready to make a move up the masthead, there is a core framework of advice that will help you on your way. Some keys to advancing your magazine career are:

- **Know the magazine business beyond your department**
- **Work hard**
- **Be an expert**
- **Generate ideas and communicate them**
- **Learn from the top**

Read on to find out how to put these words of advice into action, along with tips that will help you get ahead in each magazine department.

## How to Move Up the Masthead

**Know the business beyond your department.** A broad appreciation of the industry and knowledge of the overall process of publishing is crucial in today's marketplace. Knowing the "big picture" of how magazines work will help you to grow within your own department and beyond.

For example, it's important for professionals working in marketing to really know the readers of the magazine to produce effective promotional materials and events. And editors should know just what advertisers are looking for—not to color editorial content, but to better understand how what goes into the magazine gets translated through the prism of business.

***"Before people get too involved worrying about getting to the next level, they should put effort into doing their current job as best they can."***

Todd Toth  
Associate Publisher, Transworld Media

**Work hard.** Yes, you already work hard. However, do you want to get noticed? Work beyond your assignment. If you're a writer or an editor, perhaps an interview for one story can spark ideas for the next piece. Every time you are connecting with a contact—whether they are new to you or someone you speak to all the time, there is an opportunity to gain knowledge that can help you do your job better.

Those who move up the ladder take real responsibility and ownership. That new brand extension, editorial section or account you've been asked to handle could be what gets you noticed for the next promotion. So don't frown if new work is piled on your desk. Use it to your advantage.

Whatever your role, don't waste too much downtime. Every minute counts.

***"Observe the people above you on the masthead, see if there is something you can do to lighten their load. It'll impress them and show them your skills."***

Cyndi Stivers  
Executive Vice President,  
Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia

Taking on new responsibilities will show that you want to be a part of the current and future success of your magazine. This work ethic applies to all areas of the business. People on the editorial side should raise their hands and volunteer for assignments, such as special issues or supplements. People on the business side should suggest audience questions for reader surveys or help out with an event.



**Be an expert.** One key way of moving up the masthead is to show your knowledge on a given topic, whether it's readership statistics, new technologies or print production. Be aware of how your expertise fits into the overall magazine and be willing to crossover when necessary. Being an expert doesn't mean getting pigeonholed. So if you're the beauty sales representative, get into health too.

***"It's good to be able to show that you can cover a large number of areas."***

Nathalie Friedman  
Recruiter, Lynne Palmer Executive Recruitment

**Generate ideas and communicate them.** Magazines value idea innovators. "There is nothing more valuable than a good idea," says Stivers. Don't be afraid to pitch. "Every advertiser can find the budget for a great idea," adds Toth. "The first thing out of many advertisers' mouths is, 'We don't have the budget,' but what they're really saying is, 'We don't have the budget for that idea.' Bring them a good idea and it's a new sale."

**Learn from the top.** Watch and learn from the people above you. The landscape is different in every office and magazine company, so find a mentor or career coach who can help guide you through your career.

# Recommendations on Getting Ahead in Each Magazine Department

**Each magazine department—including editorial, consumer marketing, advertising sales, marketing, management/finance, research and production—requires its own set of skills and particular work habits for you to succeed. Here are ideas on how to stand out and get noticed in each of the major magazine departments.**

**Editorial** Editorial work requires passion, creativity, imagination, curiosity and a sense of adventure, as well as excellent visual, verbal, technical (i.e., writing, reporting, fact checking, etc.), reasoning and problem-solving skills. Editors and journalists should have a firm foundation in literature, history, political science, economics, natural science, foreign languages and sociology.

**How to get noticed:** Higher-level editorial positions require a clear understanding of the business side of magazines, a willingness to work hard at whatever tasks are assigned, and volunteering for tasks beyond the daily routine (i.e., be a team player).

**Consumer Marketing** For consumer marketing, you need to be a strategic thinker, have strong organizational skills, an affinity for data, and be an effective communicator.

**How to get noticed:** Build relationships with service bureaus and agents to stay on top of trends and new marketing programs. Suggest new ideas to your consumer marketing team.

**Research** For research, you need to be analytical, able to process large amounts of data, focused, detail-oriented and an effective communicator.

**How to get noticed:** Stay abreast of third-party research and what other magazines are doing. Suggest ways for your ad sales team to use the research you cull to help garner a new client or close a deal.

**Production** For production, you need to be proficient in technology, able to work well under deadline pressure, detail-oriented and good at problem solving.

**How to get noticed:** Build relationships with vendors to stay on top of trends and new technologies. Find new ways to make the production process more time-efficient and cost-effective. Research printing and paper innovations that can improve the quality of the finished product.

**Advertising Sales** For ad sales, you need to have knowledge about advertising, be resilient, self-motivated, a good presenter, a quick thinker and able to analyze data.

**How to get noticed:** Know your clients—and what they are trying to accomplish. Communicate with them beyond sales calls: forward relevant articles that show you understand their business and devise creative ad packages that meet their goals.

**Marketing** For marketing and promotions, you need to be a creative strategic thinker and problem-solver, organized and able to multitask.

**How to get noticed:** Get involved in the strategizing of brand extensions, events and sales tools. Offer ideas that are ahead of the trends that could garner more readers or advertisers to your magazine. If you work at a multi-title company, know what is happening at all of the magazines to see if there's potential for cross-promotions.

**Business/Management/Finance**

For business/management/finance, you need to be highly focused, analytical, a strategic thinker, effective communicator and have an affinity for data.

**How to get noticed:** Be a master of project management, budget planning and motivating your team. Know how to communicate with people who may not be well-versed in finance to ensure the objectives you set are implemented properly.



## Tips for Advancement

- **Keep a list of your work** and accomplishments
- **Ask for regular feedback** on your performance to continually improve your work
- **Speak up in meetings:** contribute positively and add value
- **Get credit for the work you're doing** and communicate that you want to help the team
- **Know the resources** outside of your company to turn to for information and ways to stay on top of the industry.
- **Join associations, clubs and committees** devoted to your specialization
- **Visit [www.magazine.org](http://www.magazine.org)** for career tips and MPA CareerTrack seminars
- **Find a mentor through the Mentoring Exchange (ME), MPA's industry-wide mentoring program,** which was created to foster career depth and growth of both mentors and protégés via the pairing of entry, experienced and mid-career professionals with peer, skip-level and senior professionals. Go to [www.magazine.org/mentor](http://www.magazine.org/mentor) for more information on how to be a mentor or a mentee.

All photography courtesy of Getty Images.  
 Cover left to right: LS010727 Jack Hollingsworth, CA31771 Ken Chernus, 200240042-008 Kei Uesugi.  
 Page two left to right: BU011114 Ryan McVay, 200251119-010 Yellow Dog Productions.  
 Back cover: 200258359-001 Steve Smith.

Magazine Publishers of America  
 American Society of Magazine Editors  
 810 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10019  
[www.magazine.org](http://www.magazine.org)

# www.magazine.org

Visit MPA's online career center at

[www.magazine.org](http://www.magazine.org), where you can search for jobs and internships posted by member magazines in our job bank. You will also find the latest career advice and resources, including information about our seminars in a variety of disciplines.

