



6. WORKING OF THE NEWS - ROOM.

6.1. Co-ordination Process

Bruce Westley divides newspaper work into three basic categories. Each of these departments is distinctly different yet each is wholly dependent on the smooth functioning of the others. These areas of responsibility are usually referred to as **'business'**, **'mechanical'** and **'editorial'**. Working newsmen are more likely to call them in order, 'the front office', 'the back office' and 'the newsroom'.

Newspaper editing is actually only one operation among several in the 'the newsroom' but the editors, particularly, must know how other branches of the total newspaper operate in order to do their job with maximum efficiency. The copy desk is essentially the 'crossroads;' between the editorial and mechanical branches of the business. The copy editor must know the mechanical phase pretty thoroughly in order to perform his editorial function.

Business Administration

The business office is the **'counting house'** of the newspaper profession. It has an obvious duty to keep the organization afloat financially.

The newspaper business office operates pretty much like any other business office. Ordinarily, it has major divisions: an advertising department (which might be broken down into two autonomous departments, classified and display advertising), a circulation department, a promotion department, and an accounting or auditing department. A major officer of the business staff typically heads each of these branches. Usually a 'business manager', to whom each of these department heads is responsible, directs the entire operation. The publisher himself often handles the business manager function, especially in the case of smaller dailies.

6.2. Advertising Department: the advertising department, headed by an advertising manager, ordinarily has four divisions:

1. The local or retail division consists of a staff of specialist who solicit, lay out, correct, and sometimes '**merchandise**' local advertising accounts. This can be expected to be the largest of the advertising department sub divisions and offers the most creative employment in newspaper, advertising for journalism graduates with advertising training.
2. Another group of specialists concerns itself with obtaining and handling '**foreign**' or '**national**' advertising accounts. The division deals, directly with advertising agencies, which handle the accounts of the big advertisers, usually with the help of an advertising representative in metropolitan cities, a service, which intercedes for the newspaper directly with the agencies.
3. Another concern of the advertising manager is '**classified**' although this may be a separate department. Classified ads have gained steadily in recent years as a source of newspaper revenue and hence are receiving increasing attention by newspaper executives.
4. A fourth division of an advertising department is the 'merchandising' or 'service' division. Its purpose is to assist the advertiser in getting maximum return on his advertising budget. This is the most recent and rapidly growing phase of newspaper advertising and ranges from a part-time trouble-shooter to a complex research organization ready to provide a potential advertiser with detailed information on the buying habits of the newspaper's readers with reference to his particular product.

The advertising manager coordinates all these activities and is the person ordinarily responsible to the business manager, and sometimes directly to the publisher, for their successful operation.

Why Are Ads Important to a Newspaper?



The number of pages beyond a minimum that most newspapers set is determined not by the news division, but by the amount of **advertising** sold for that day. (Regardless of advertising, however, newspapers add extra news pages for big local stories such as tornadoes, sports championships or other major events.) The advertising division places ads on pages before they are released to the news division. As a rule, newspapers print slightly more advertising than news. **Ads may account for 60 percent or more of weekday pages, but in the larger Sunday edition, it is not unusual for news to take up more space than ads.** The ratio of ads to news must be high because newspapers cannot stay in business without advertising revenue. Editors call the space left for them a "**news hole.**" The advertising division and the news division have no influence over each other's content.

Three types of advertising dominate modern newspapers:

- **Display ads** -- With photos and graphics, display ads can cost thousands of rupees depending on their size. These ads, generally placed by department stores, movie theaters and other businesses, may be prepared by an advertising agency or the advertising department itself. They are called **run-of-press ads** and they produce the most revenue.
- **Classified ads** -- Classified ads, often called want ads, appear in a miniature **typeface** called **agate**. These ads come from individuals trying to buy or sell items, businesses seeking workers, or trade people offering a wide variety of

services. "Classifieds" are affordable, popular and highly effective in reaching tens of thousands of potential customers.

- **Inserts** -- Inserts, the third form of advertising, are favored by large national chain stores. These colorful booklets are trucked to newspapers in huge bundles for distribution with the Sunday edition. Inserts produce less revenue than run-of-press advertising. Newspapers charge for distributing inserts, but otherwise have no control over their content or print quality.

Circulation Department: Circulation is another major division of the business office and is usually headed by a major executive, the circulation manager, since the newspaper ultimately stands or falls on the basis of the number of steady readers that can be enrolled.

The circulation manager may have any or all of the following subdivisions under his supervision:

- **City Circulation-** it involves the maintenance of circulation records for the city of publication, the recruitment, supervisor and reimbursement, the supervision of district men who oversee circulation by subdivision of the city, taking responsibility for moving papers the newsstands, relations with news-stand operators, etc.
- **Area Circulation-** responsibilities here include getting papers destined for the surrounding area into the mail and operation of a fleet of tempo/taxis to carry the papers into surrounding area as where mail service is not rapid enough. The circulation manager is also in charge of moving the papers into the appropriate distribution channels as they move into the mailing room from the pressroom.
- **Sales Promotion-** it involves the direction of an office staff to keep records, notifying subscribers when their subscription need renewing, the handling of complaints, new subscriptions and renewals over the counter, by mail, etc. promotion is essentially the 'public relations' department of the newspaper. Where a separate promotion department exists, it usually is responsible for initiating promotion policies, subject to the approval of the publisher, and usually coordinates the promotional activities of other departments.

6.3. Mechanical Department

The entire mechanical operation is usually under the supervision of plant superintendent who is directly responsible to the publisher. In a typical situation, he will have five departments under his control, the composing room, the stereotype department, the pressroom, the engraving department, and the proof desk.

The basic functions of each are:

1. **Composing Room-** this is the point of chief contact between the editorial side and the mechanical side. It is in this department that 'copy' is set into type and the type is assembled into newspaper pages. The type is 'set' by automatic typesetting machines such as the linotype 'straight matter' or body type is set according to instructions on news copy sent from the newsroom, headlines are set from similar directions, ads are first set into type and then assembles on the basis of instructions on advertising copy from the advertising department. All of these materials are then assembled into newspaper pages, following the instructions on page 'dummies', which show where each element is to go.

The composing room is often subdivided, especially in the larger plants, to permit the greater efficiency that specialization makes possible. Hence, there may be an 'ad alley' where ads are made up before they are put into newspaper pages.

2. **Stereotype Department-** here newspaper pages are run through a series of steps which prepare them to be clamped as curved plates of metal onto today's high speed rotary presses.

Some small dailies papers still use 'flatbed' or 'cylinder' presses and others use 'duplex' presses. In both cases the papers are printed directly from type and hence there is no need for a full-scale stereotype department. Vast majority of dailies use rotary, web-perfecting presses, which means that the newspaper is printed on paper that feeds from huge rolls and the impression is applied from curved plates which rotate at high speed.

The stereotype department has two major operations, first, to roll out a reverse impression of the newspaper page onto a papier-mâché 'mat' then to 'cast' into a curve by pouring molten metal against the curved surface of the mat. After the cast has cooled and been trimmed, it is ready to be clamped onto the press.

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3. **Engraving Department-** many smaller newspapers have insufficient need for 'art' to operate an engraving department, having the work done commercially instead. However, most large newspapers find it economical to do their own work. Photoengraving reduces news pictures and other newspaper art to a form in which they can be printed. In the case of a photograph, the job is to 'screen' the picture in such a way that an etched metal plate is produced with a surface of dots. The dots vary in size to produce shadings of black and white that can be impressed on paper.
 4. **Pressroom-** rotary presses can turn out newspapers at phenomenal speeds. They not only print but also cut, fold and trim the papers and deliver them directly to the mailing room.
 5. **Proof Desk-** in a sense, proof desk lies by the side of the mechanical, editorial and advertising departments but is usually responsible to the mechanical superintendent. Its object is to correct all typographical errors. A 'proof' is taken of all material set in the composing room, including ads and editorial matter, by inking the type and taking an impression of it on a rather simple 'proof press'. These proofs are then compared with the 'copy' to make sure that the two conform. Proof reading is hence a more or less mechanical operation, unlike copy reading.

6.4. Editorial Department

The primary concern of the copy editor in the organizational chart of the newspaper is, of course, the editorial department. Here the description is not so easy, since very marked differences are discernible from the one newspaper to another. However, a typical organizational scheme would go something like this:

The editorial department actually has two sides, and usually these are separately responsible to the publisher. They are '**news**' and '**editorial**'. The news side is usually under the supervision of a managing or executive editor. The editorial page crew consists of editorial writers and is directed by a 'chief editorial writer' and 'editor' or 'editor-in-chief' or sometimes an 'editorial page editor'.

1. **The News Desk-** all stories destined for the newspaper, whether they come from the typewriters of reporters and rewrite men or from the several wire services, teleprinters and other sources, requires editing. This duty falls chiefly on the copyreader who sits on the horseshoe shape table called the

desk. The city editor and other editors read all the copy. The editors with a crew of men edit the news designated as cable, teleprinter, city beats, society, business, finance, sports, and reserve news. In larger newspapers there is a separate desk for international news. This copyreader, **‘also called the deskman, rim man or ‘mechanic’** of the editorial room, is the anonymous and frequently unappreciated collaborator of the writer.

Copyreaders are generally paid higher than reporters. The work holds out attractions for men with editorial ability. The work is mainly two-fold: the editing of the story and the construction of a suitable headline for it. The amount of this work varies with each paper and even at different timings on each day. On a big desk the copyreader may edit from 10 to 15 columns. The copy reader usually faces three problems:

- To tighten up the story and thereby speed up the action
- To cut out the excess matter
- To reduce the story so that a telegraphic editor could splash it in a page one box if he chose to handle it that way.