

TIMELY TIPS

Staff Management

Documenting Systems and Decisions for Your Yearbook Staff

OBJECTIVE

Students will identify key systems and decisions used by their yearbook staff, then document them clearly so expectations and workflows are shared and consistent.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Whiteboard or shared digital document
- Current ladder or deadline calendar
- Staff manual
- Sticky notes or digital comments

PART 1

INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)

Ask students:

When questions come up during production, how easy is it to find clear answers about what we do and why? Where do you go for answers?

Have students share their responses and document the answers on the board.

PART 2

GUIDED DISCUSSION (15 MINUTES)

Explain that strong yearbook staffs do not rely on memory, tradition or one experienced editor. They rely on systems everyone can see, understand and access.

On the board, create three specific columns:

Decision/Process

- Assigning pages and deadlines
- Approving coverage changes
- Checking names and captions
- Handling missed deadlines

Staff Direction

- Editor assigns verbally
- Written on the ladder
- Shared in a group chat
- Decided case by case

Documentation

- Staff manual
- Shared document or checklist
- Ladder
- Other

As a class, fill in several rows together using real examples from your staff's workflow.

Guide discussions with these questions:

- Which processes are clearly documented?
- Which rely on memory or verbal explanation?
- Where do confusions or delays happen in the production process?

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PART 3

INDEPENDENT PRACTICE (15 MINUTES)

Divide students into small groups and assign each group one focus area:

- Workflow and deadlines
- Coverage decisions
- Design standards
- Writing and editing expectations

Each group documents its assigned area by answering the following:

- What is the system or decision?
- Why do we do it this way?
- Who is responsible?
- Where should this live so everyone can access it?

PART 4

WRAP-UP AND REFLECTION (5 MINUTES)

Bring the class back together and ask the following:

- Which systems were easiest to explain?
- Which were hardest because they have never been clearly defined?
- How would this document help new staff members or next year's team?