

10 design tips to save you time and money

Design isn't about "making pretty." It isn't about "jazzing up" your paper. Design is about creating a product that is crisp, contemporary and compelling.

It's also about saving you money by being more efficient. Here are ten design tips to help you save time, effort and money with every issue.

1. FIND your best fonts. You don't have to buy new fonts to make your paper more readable. You probably have some hidden gems in your system—but perhaps no one has taken the time to look. If you're using Times, there are others that work much better. Among them: Century Old Style, Cheltenham and Utopia.

2. TRIM font lists. There's nothing more frustrating for a designer than to have to scroll up-and-down, up-and down, up-and-down to click on just the right font for a headline. Use font management software to keep these to no more than two dozen lines.

3. REDO typography and edit to save space. Review listings such as a weekly calendar, an agenda of public meetings and the like. Often, trimming these items and placing them together can result in a savings of an entire page of newsprint. See if you can't tighten the typography in classifieds. Over the course of a year, saving a page of newsprint here and there can make a serious difference in your bottom line.



Time is money. Make deadline-every time

4. CREATE page models. With occasional exceptions, page 1 will tend to fall into a half-dozen similar looks. Take advantage of this by creating models your editor can refer to before she begins designing.

5. MAKE a plan. Don't wait until every story is finished to begin work on a page. Instead of assembling a page so that every story will fit, design the page first and then tweak the length of the stories if needed. Include your writers in the planning so they will know how long their story must be.

6. CREATE software templates. Problems with styles and the like on a "recycled" electronic page will slow down pagination again and again. Start fresh by building sound templates and using them.

7. CREATE pagination libraries. Set up your software so that your designers can go to libraries and drag out elements such as column sigs, section flags—even whole parts of pages, such as the

masthead and index. Don't let your designers try to convince you that it's better to just work from the same page from the last issue (see #6, above).

8. USE style sheets. Incorporate linked and nested styles into everything you do on the page. These can save a half-hour or more in pagination time per issue. Have your editor use that time to do a better job of planning.

9. CROSS-TRAIN. That sports writer can be trained to do some news pages, and vice versa. With increased effort on the part of all newsroom staff, you can publish a quality newspaper with fewer people. And take advantage of the skills of people in your advertising design department to help the newsroom with charts and graphs.

10. MAKE DEADLINE. Nothing costs more than being late off the press. The overtime alone can be a killer...and the problem often begins on the desk. If the designer has a reputation of always being late, move that person's deadline up. If it's a problem reporter, work with that person. Never, ever accept anyone habitually missing deadline.

These ten tips probably won't save you gobs of money overnight—but over time they can create substantial savings. And I'm reminded of a quote from the late Sen. Everett Dirksen of Illinois: "A billion here and a billion there and pretty soon you're talking big money."



'101 HENNINGER HELPFUL HINTS'

is filled with so many good ideas. You'll find yourself asking: "Why didn't I think of that?"

Kevin Slimp

Director
Institute of Newspaper
Technology

FREE DESIGN EVALUATION:

Ed Henninger offers design evaluations—at no charge and with no obligation—to readers of this column.

ED HENNINGER is an independent newspaper consultant and Director of Henninger Consulting.

Offering comprehensive newspaper design services including redesigns, workshops, design training and design evaluations.

www.henningerconsulting.com
edh@henningerconsulting.com
803-327-3322