

Foundation workshop

LAUNCHING & RUNNING THE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

For Newspaper & Magazine Editors, Managers and Staff in Southern Africa

Facilitator: Graeme Addison

Organised by: Editorial Assignments at the Vaal Cybercentre, Parys

Duration: 3 days to one week

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this workshop is to provide a basic, holistic understanding of how to establish and successfully run a sustainable community newspaper in the countries of southern Africa. During the three-day workshop, participants play an active role in drawing up systematic plans for the paper. The overall objective is to develop a sound and practicable Business Plan. This applies as much to not-for-profit papers as to those which aim for commercial success. Whatever the source of funding – advertising, donors, contributions – the community newspaper needs to be viable. The Business Plan incorporates as sub-units the Editorial Plan; Financial & Management Plan; Facilities, Technology & Production Plan; Marketing, Sales & Distribution Plan; and the Quality & Services Review Plan. Each plan in itself unpacks into sub-plans: for example, the Editorial Plan includes strategies and training schemes for Reporting & Writing, News & Feature Editing, Design & Layout, Legal & Ethical matters, and Concepts of the Paper's Role. These many aspects cannot be dealt with in the holistic workshop but the key elements of each are highlighted and needs identified for further discussion, mentoring and development. The vital importance of IT skills is constantly emphasised, along with the need for a presence in cyberspace. At the end of the workshop, participants should be able to:

- Write a clear and simple **Manifesto** for the paper
- Parcel out the **work to be done on each sub-unit** of the Business Plan
- Write the plans, keeping them short but specific, and **compile all into a final Business Plan**
- Create a **design dummy** that embodies all features of the product
- **Prioritise the actions** to be taken on a critical path with set targets
- Set about **raising initial finance** and **commence work** on the launch
- **Establish departments** of the paper and staff them, as well as **find contributors and service providers**
- **Put in place a training plan** focusing on IT and related or subordinate skills
- **Schedule the first year to 18 months** of production, highlighting the special **events and promotions**
- **Meet the facilitator again** to present the plans, dummy, critical path targets, and practical arrangements
- **Begin work on the first issue** with mentoring by experienced professionals.

The content and presentation style of the workshop have been developed over two decades by Graeme Addison and associates, collaborating as Editorial Assignments. Included in the programme is the use of a social networking blogspace, www.blogloco.info, which is explained and used on the course and becomes the central clearing house for ideas, queries, dialogue and progress reports. The workshop is designed to be residential as nights are used for personal skills development on the computers. Video aids are used during the programme. Synergies with other community media and support agencies are also explored. Mentoring follows the workshop, with the details to be decided. The following pages give the workshop content and day outline. A budget is submitted separately.

| LAUNCHING & RUNNING THE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER | | |
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| WORKSHOP CONTENT | | |
| <i>Skills requirements are outlined and basic methods demonstrated and practised</i> | | |
| SECTION 1 | CONCEPTS OF THE NEWSPAPER'S ROLE | Social responsibility mission Commercial carrier Activist crusader Detective investigator Community noticeboard Note: Influence of new media |
| SECTION 2 | THE BUSINESS PLAN | All of the sub-units below explained and connected holistically. Discipline, order, systems, checks Management responsibilities Note: Management systems off the shelf |
| SECTION 3 | EDITORIAL PLAN | Newsgathering, features, opinion and investigations Photojournalism and access to images Sources and sales of news & photography syndications Design & Layout, DTP production and proofing Legal & Ethical matters Note: Editorial systems to be devised and applied |
| SECTION 4 | FINANCES & MANAGEMENT | Sources of finance and cash flow Nature of capital, maintenance and depreciation Administration and bookkeeping for analysis and taxation Overheads, running exp, fixed & variable costs Staffing recruitment, training and support Manufacturing, production, distribution, sales Security, logistics, transport, insurances, legal fees Note: Financial systems of the shelf |
| SECTION 5 | FACILITIES & PRODUCTION | Premises, rentals, access, vehicles, communications Networking with service providers and collaborators Leapfrogging into the digital age – electronic tools Needs and competencies analysis Must-have IT skills development (Word, Excel, DTP) Reproduction, printing, delivery, storage |
| SECTION 6 | MARKETING, SALES & DISTRIBUTION | Sales models for distribution, returns and audits Sales models for advertising & sponsorship revenue Vital importance of statistics and gridplan Planning and executing special event promotions Using new media for promotions, sales and revenue Sales force motivation, training and supervision |
| SECTION 7 | QUALITY, SERVICES & TRAINING | Principles of departmental audits – quality & income Getting quality performance from freelances & service providers Development of training plans for departments The business S-Curve and your progress reaching targets Monthly, quarterly and annual reports Team reviews, replanning and sustainability |
| SECTION 8 | PRACTICAL EXERCISES | During the course, participants are expected to complete individual and group projects. The approach is intensive and we recommend that the workshop should be residential to allow full use of evenings. The computer network is open at all hours for work on the BlogLoco and assignments. |
| SECTION 9 | SYNERGIES & NETWORKING | Finding like-minded organisations & people to work with Solving problems using established procedures and resources Utilising support from various social agencies locally and abroad Principles of syndication of news and sponsorships Using social networking via the web to advance the paper's cause & image |
| SECTION 10 | WORKSHOP REVIEW & FROM HERE | Workshop concludes with an open-ended review and a structured questionnaire. As the approach is outcomes-based, further monitoring of the project is required over future phases. |

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| WORKSHOP PROGRAMME | | | | |
| <i>Skills requirements are outlined and basic methods demonstrated and practised</i> | | | | |
| | DAY ONE | DAY TWO | DAY THREE | AFTERWARD |
| 07h30 | START 8am | BREAKFAST | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meet facilitator once a week for progress report • set up mentoring schedule for newspaper training & development |
| 08h30 | Business Plan | Markt & Sales | Quality & Svcs | |
| 09h30 | Editorial Plan | Distribution | Synergies | |
| 10h30 | TEATIME | | | |
| 11h30 | Editorial Plan | Editorial | Course review | |
| 12h30 | LUNCHTIME | | | |
| 13h30 | Fin. & Mgmt | Editorial | END COURSE | |
| 14h30 | Facilities | Staffing | Using materials devised by the participants, the facilitator prepares a COURSE REPORT setting out: | |
| 15h30 | TEATIME | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs analysis – finances, facilities, staffing, publishing and other requirements |
| 16h30 | Day review | Day review | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where to from here – the team plan for the critical path targets | |
| 17h30 | END OF DAY | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggested training and development schedule |
| 18h30 | LEISURE | LEISURE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is expected in progress reports | |
| 19h30 | DINNER TIME | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcomes based assessment plan over future phases of project |
| 20h30 | Assignment | Assignment | COURSE REPORT is submitted to participants and donors | |
| 21h30 | Video | Video | | |
| 22h30 | END OF EVENING | | | |

PLEASE SEE THE SEPARATE BUDGET

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Vaal Cybercentre, PO Box 289 Parys, South Africa.