UNIT 7: MEDIA ORGANIZATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

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7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to :

- Identify the different departments of a print media establishments
- Explain the role and coordination of the different departments
- Understand the printing procedure of a media organization
- Describe the different printing processes
- Get an overview of the packaging, transportation and distribution of the print industry

7.2 INTRODUCTION

This is the seventh unit of the course on Business communication and Media Management. In this unit we shall introduce you to the different departments of a print media establishment, role and coordination between different departments, printing, packaging and distribution.

7.3 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF PRINT MEDIA ESTABLISHMENTS

Organizational setup vary from organization to organization depending upon its size and the different services catered for the readers. In general, most of the newspaper establishments have three main departments :

1. Editorial Department
2. Business Department
3. Mechanical Department

However, most of the organizations have other departments also which are listed below-

1. Editorial Department
2. Business department including advertising, circulation, billing etc
3. Printing and production department
4. Computers, engineering and equipment\store
5. Personnel, sales promotion and PR

7.3.1 Editorial Department

The role and responsibilities of the editorial department is determined by the administrative structure. This, in turn , is determined by the number of staff members employed. Newspapers and magazines have different structures. Since a newspaper has to be produced everyday, it calls for speedy work with lots of persons working in it. But a magazine may be weekly, fortnightly or monthly and hence it has a different structure of management. In publication houses, which print out a group of newspapers and magazines, the chief editor is the one who is responsible for the total policy of the publishing house. Though individual editors are free to express their opinions and to adopt attitudes, the chief editor has to bring in a community approach to avoid direct personal criticism by of one another by the different editors. He is the link between the management and editorial departments. The term Chief Editor has come into vogue only recently in

India. In the West, editor-in-chief is often known simply as the editor. In cases where newspapers are published from different centres, the chief editor is one who has a number of resident editors, each in charge of the edition coming out from that particular city. The Indian Express, The Times of India, The Statesman, The Hindustan Times are all chain newspapers with resident editors for respective editions.

Working of the editorial department:

The editor holds the key position in the newspaper organization. He is responsible for the editorial content of the newspapers that includes everything from comics to news stories to editorials. Unless somebody works as a reporter, he will have little contact with the editor. The editor's influence is exerted through those who report directly to that editor usually the managing editor and the editorial page editor.

The main functions of the editorial department are :

1. Gathering of news
2. Macro and micro selection of news and features
3. Editing of news and features
4. Interpretation of news
5. Selection of lead articles
6. Editorial writings

Since the editor of a newspaper cannot handle the entire editing work, he\she is therefore assisted by number of persons such as chief correspondents, resident editors, managing editors, assistant editors, news editors, sub-editors, stringers, staffers and other functionaries like photographers, cartoonists, feature writers and reviewers etc. as shown in the following figure-1. In fact, the editor is the captain of the team. He guides those working under him and is aware of their talents and makes the best use of their abilities. His main concern is to get material from the assistant editors in order to fill up the editorial page. The organizational structure of a media establishment is given below:

Fig –1 : Organisational structure in an editorial department

Source : Kothari, Gulab, Newspaper Management in India, Metropolitan : Intercultural Open University, 1992

A good editor of a newspaper is aware of the scope and interpretation of news. He takes keen interest in the presentation of news and is aware of the details of important happenings. He keeps track of the reader's readiness. He influences people to strive willingly for mutual objectives.

The editor gauges the public mind to give his ideas and opinions on current issues to maintain cordial public relations.

He is also responsible for day-today review of the newspaper. Such a review is done in a meeting which is convened everyday by the editor. During the

course of such meetings a decision is taken on editorials, comments, standard of news, its presentation and placement, news in competing papers, allotment of work, arrangement of photographs, correction and denial of news etc.

In case of a metropolitan daily newspaper, we can categorize the different departments as given in figure-5 below :

Fig-5 : Typical newsroom organization of the metropolitan daily newspaper

Source : Brook, Brian, S et al., 'News Reporting and Writing', New York : St Martin's Press, 1988

The managing editor oversees the total day-to-day operation of the news department and coordinates the work of the newsroom. The wire editor scans the thousands of words transmitted by the major news services-

Associated Press and United Press international- and selects those stories that are most relevant to the paper, edits them, and adds headlines. The city editor supervises the newspaper's local coverage. He\she assigns stories to local ‚beat, reporters or General-assignment reporters. Beat reporters have a specified area to cover : city hall, courts, police station. General –assignment reporters handle a variety of stories, ranging all the way from fires and accidents to the local flower show. The city editor also assigns photographers to do along with reporters on selected stories. The copy editor usually works inside a special U-shaped desk (called the slot) in the newsroom and supervises the editing, headline writing, and changes in stories submitted by local reporters.

In large newspapers, the key news executives are (1) the city editor, directing reporters covering activities in the newspaper's primary circulation area; (2) the news agency editor coordinating news received over communication networks from various news services; (3) the sports editor, directing local sports coverage and selecting sports news received from news agencies; (4) the editorial page editor, directing editorial writing and selection of letters to the editors and political cartoons; (5) the State or regional editor, supervising correspondents working for the newspaper in areas more distant from the plant; and (6) the society or women's editor, handling social or family oriented news.

There are also other editors who occupy important positions in producing a newspaper. They include (1) the chief copy editor, directing the copyreaders who edit stories and write headlines; (2) the make-up editor, coordinating the newsroom with the mechanical department; (3) special section editors producing Sunday supplements, television guides, home magazines and special sections; and (4) department editors, who direct coverage of fields such as aerospace, finance, advertising, theatre, automobiles, book reviews and real estate.

The organizational chart of a publishing

Now let us take the case of a book publisher.

tim is given in fig-3 below -

As is evident from the figure, the media managers are at the second level of the hierarchy, although senior managers their juniors at all levels. The chief editor, production manager (editorial and creative),' sales manager, and accounts and finance manager are the chief managers of a print media firm. In case of book publishing, the chief editor **rules the roost.** He also guides the production manager, and manager (editorial and creative),' the two managers who are directly associated with his operations. In some book publishing firms the chief editor may be the supreme commander of all the pre-press,' press,' and post-press operations.

Rules the roost :
The most useful person of the group

7.3.5 The Business Department

The second most important department in a newspaper is the business department,' which earns revenue for the newspaper. It is divided into two main divisions – **advertising** and **circulation.** The circulation department deals with the dispatch of copies to the city and beyond the city through road,' rail and air. The advertising department is divided into divisions for display and classified advertising,' each of which is usually solicited by different salesmen. The business department also includes accountants,' janitors and telephone operators.

Janitor: A caretaker of a building,' also washes,' cleans etc.

The Advertising Department :

Newspapers derive their revenue from mainly two sources : **advertising** and **circulation.** Advertising provides 25-30 % of the total revenue while circulation accounts for about 5-25 %. For this reason advertising department is considered to be the most important department of a newspaper industry. As circulation promotes sales,' advertising promotes space. This department must constantly strive to improve the advertising service and increase the advertising volume because rising costs of newsprint,' competition among newspapers and the threat from satellite television have greatly affected the financial status of the newspaper industry.

Advertising revenues generally come from three sources :

i. Display advertising : In this form of advertising,' display advertisements may have few words,' much blank space and often an illustration of the product. Display advertisements have strong

attention value and high durability depending on the conspicuous arrangement of contents – large or bold type face, attractive illustrations, colour and other devices.

ii. Local or casual advertising : This type of advertising is done on an irregular basis to announce some special event such as a sale, opening of a branch, starting a new business or introducing a new product or service in the area.

iii. Classified Advertising : Classified advertisements are published without any conspicuous display on specific pages of newspapers. Classified advertisements are grouped by contents and they contain diverse elements. As the name implies, these advertisements are categorized under small heads for instance, advertisements such as 'Property wanted,' 'Plot for sale,' 'Lost and found,', 'Matrimonials' etc.

The main functions of the advertising department are :

a. Designing and Production :

The main purpose of advertising is to attract attention to and create an interest in the product or service advertised. It should create desirability to use among the users. For local and directly released advertisements, the department offers its services and expertise in preparing copy and layouts to produce the desired impact.

b. Billing and Collection :

Another important function of the advertising department is the preparation of bills and collection of payments from advertisers. Payments for classified advertisements are usually received in advance. Payments for those released by agencies accredited to INS become due only after 15 days

c. Dummy Preparation :

Dummy edition means a blueprint of an advertising and\or editorial contents of a publication. Elements are only sketched or minisfure layouts are prepared. No proofs or bastings are involved. For advertising department, dummy preparation provides a way by which it can blueprint the exact location of every advertisement instead of leaving that important function to the composing department. The dummy system places responsibility on

the editorial department for the choice and positioning of all reading matter directly in the hands of editorial staff. Hence dummy system provides a means of planning an edition in a controlled and orderly fashion.

The Circulation Department

Circulation means the number of newspaper copies sold and paid for. It is the foundation of a newspaper's success : if is the basis of all revenue. It is true that newspaper sales account for less revenue than advertising, but circulation is the force that makes the advertising pay. Circulation is also the measure of the newspaper's service. Greater circulation gives the evidence that the newspaper is fulfilling its obligations to the community.

Circulation of a newspaper depends on the following factors :

(a) Population

Though with the increase in population, the size of the newspaper also increases, yet the size of the population does not always determine its volume of circulation. Some communities with small population have newspapers with large circulation, and some communities with large populations prove to be poor newspaper receivers. This implies that internal population conditions as well as population numbers have a strong bearing on circulation.

(b) Education

The enrolment of students in institutions of higher learning has considerably increased. The opening of higher educational institutions, improved methods of teaching, development in the field of science and communication and greater expenditure on education have all contributed to greater eagerness for information and wider and more intensive reading of newspapers.

(c) Social conditions

Circulation is directly affected by shifting tides of urban renewal, population mobility, suburban flight and other sociological factors. Whether such conditions are localized or national in scope, newspaper management is obviously challenged to cope in ways that call for resourceful and innovative approaches to the problem at hand.

Circulation department of a newspaper establishment is similar to the marketing department of a business or industrial establishment. The main functions of the circulation department are :

(a) Packing and Dispatch

Newspapers are packed in packets and dispatched off to sales agents after it comes out of the press. While packing, care has to be taken so that it reaches the agents without damage or delay.

(b) Transportation and Distribution

Since the newspaper has a very short life, the speed with which it can be distributed becomes critically important. The circulation manager has to co-ordinate the different modes of transportation so that the newspaper could reach the readers in the shortest possible time. It is the responsibility of the newspaper to work out its own transportation network in determining the distribution in the minimum possible time.

(c) Relationship with Agents

The agents constitute the most important persons for circulation department. This is because they come in direct contact with the readers and are aware of the taste and preferences of the readers. They are also well aware about the position of other competing newspapers because they are in direct touch with the readers. They can be extremely helpful to know the response of the readers about the contents of the newspapers, price of paper, timely supply of newspaper etc.

(d) Subscriptions

This section usually deals with the distribution of newspapers sent by mail. Some subscription copies may also be distributed through agents. This section receives advance payment for a newspaper for a definite period.

(e) Collection of Sales

This is another important function of the circulation department. Efficient collection of revenue is one of the key factors in building a list of permanent subscribers. If the paper is delivered by

independent contractor, its proceed is collected on dual system. The contractor collects it from the customers and the newspaper collects it from the contractor. Hence, circulation revenue forms a vital component of the cash flow and total revenue receivies.

(i) Print Order

The circulation department also determines the number of copies to be printed of each edition. It prepares print order for each edition on the basis of supply requirements of agents, hawkers, subscribers, advertising voucher copies, complimentary copies and other requirements. This operation is time bound and it establishes deadlines for other departments.

(g) Supply of information to RNI and ABC

The circulation department also supplies information to the Registrar of Newspapers of India (RNI) and to the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC). This is a statutory obligation on the part of the department. ABC and RNI are the accounting organizations which audits and accredit the circulation of daily and periodical newspapers.

(h) Promoting Circulation

The circulation department should also build, maintain and promote circulation. In the absence of this function, advertising would suffer from leading to a loss in revenue. Circulation can be promoted by giving inducements to the new subscribers, distributing free subblements, reducing advertising rates and by promoting prize winning contests. Circulation can also be promoted by drick and timely supply of the paper at the desired place.

7.3.3 The Production Department

The production department is mainly responsible for transforming the creative work of reporter, editor and advertising people into the finished product of the newspaper. There is a Press Manager in this department who runs a battery of technical personnel to look after different aspects of production – typesetting, art studio, platemaking and printing. The composing

room is one of the major sub divisions of the production department where types and pages are assembled or set either by old methods-like hand composing, linotype, monotype, Ludlow or through computer and photo type setters. The other important departments are the platemaking department where plates or surfaces are prepared to be mounted on the machines to reproduce the printed pages and the press room itself where ink actually meets paper on letterpress, offset and on gravur machines. There can be further subdivisions of these departments in case of large newspapers.

7.3.4 Reference Section

Almost all of the print media establishments have a reference section. The reference section contains a huge collection of up-to-date books, study materials, magazines, journals etc. This section is utilized by the reporters and other office staff for writing certain articles or features in newspapers.

The reference material is essential for any news organization. Almost all analytical reports and research based articles and sometimes a follow-up story is written on the basis of reference material. These reference materials are collected during the course of the time. A good reference library is an asset for any organization. A morgue- where files of old newspapers are kept is a reference in itself. The materials must be properly catalogued and categorized to be used as ready references. Some of the reputed organizations also keep a photo library. All media organizations – be it a newspaper, a radio or television or news agency – all have a good reference library from where they use materials from time to time. The reference materials could be in the form of –

i. Collection of books
ii. Annual reports of ministries and other organizations
iii. Economic surveys, union and state budgets
iv. The literature collected during the course of news coverings, press conferences etc
v. Files of newspapers and magazines (morgue)
vi Collection of photographs, diagrams, drawings and charts