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EIGHT WAYS EDITORIAL CAN RESPOND TO LATE AD CHANGES

WHEN YOUR RUN list keeps changing after your ad close date has passed, a lot of hard editorial work can go to waste as you try to adjust your stories in response to a new pagination. Here are some of the tactics I use to try to prevent those late-breaking ad changes from disrupting production workflow.

1. Assign, design and produce less timely half-page, full-page, two-page and three-page stories for your editorial bank. This allows you to easily swap in, for example, a three-page story in place of a four-page story if a last-minute ad comes in.
2. Try this strategy to accommodate late changes without having to finalize the entire book at once: Designate stories that must be a certain number of pages as “fixed pages.” Recognize which stories in your lineup are fixed and which are flexible, aiming to make at least 30 percent of the book fixed configuration. Produce your fixed pages in advance of your ad close, allowing for minor late changes, such as left pages turning into right-hand pages. Allow flexible pages to be changed (cut back, stretched or interrupted with partial ads) at a late stage. (Hint: Try to make the editor’s note a fixed page.)
3. Work with your art director to design stories such that most pages can be either spreads or singles. This way, if you need to split up a spread to accommodate a single-page ad, you can do so. Similarly, if an ad falls out you can easily turn two single pages into a spread.
4. Talk to your ad sales department a few days before ad close to find out about unusual configurations. If you’re going to need to accommodate three right-hand pages in a row in a certain section it will save time if you can finalize designs with this in mind.
5. If you’re in charge of the pagination, save time by making yourself a chart of all of the most efficient form configurations and the location of all the form breaks for all book sizes. That way you’ll know where bind-ins will fall and whether or not you’re able to accommodate new elements.
6. Wait until late in the production process to finalize page numbers, but keep track of embedded page references (e.g., see sidebar, page TK) so you can quickly find and fill in final folio information.
7. Encourage your art staff to develop alternate layout configurations for less important pages, such as the shopping sources page, the contributors page, the letters page and others that could be changed to accommodate partial ads or soak up space if needed.
8. When the possibility of major page alterations due to ad changes comes up, develop a game plan, but don’t actually change your pages or alarm your staff until you have confirmation. I’m often surprised at the number of possible changes that never actually materialize!

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