

Best Practices

Reader Involvement

- Enable the reader comment section on the newspaper Web site. It provides great feedback for everyone, instead of all email going directly to the reporters. Any forum for readers to share ideas is potentially a good thing.
- Different take on opinion columns – The Angry Rant allows a staffer to voice his/her opinion very candidly.
- Take polls asking political questions. Then, do a video story with results from the poll. The video story allows you to extend the story.
- Polls are printed in Question of the Week. Random question asked each week to draw in the readers.
- Use Survey Monkey as a means to collect information from your readers.
- Get faculty to write quest columns.

How Do you Encourage Good Work from Editors?

- Full scholarships for editor in chief.
- Stipends for editors.
- Advertising dollars are used to pay writers (student government can't touch those dollars).
- Print photos/emails of staffers so they become common faces on campus. It gets the readers to identify with their newspaper staff.
- I received a letter of recognition for grad school from our Dean. The non-monetary benefit of networking and doing good, solid, well-respected content that the administration recognizes, has its benefits.

Arts & Entertainment

- Improved graphics drives the content – the layout itself is entertainment.
- CD exchange in collaboration with our radio station.
- Check out alum who is now a celebrity/known business person – there is built-in appeal to your school and its students.

- Don't forget national coverage. Update your contacts to make sure you are reaching out beyond local coverage. Many movie, record and video companies will send advanced copies for your review. It only helps them to have reviews of their product.
- We have a push for more series in A&E. For example, if it's the month of October, which centers on Halloween, we'll do stories on the paranormal, psychics, etc.
- Write about your campus bands. That makes them become "names" and helps to create the genesis of the buzz.
- We have an art major that draws comics for us each week. We get free comics and it helps her promote her art work.
- We layout our reviews with graphics/photos in the background. The graphics make the content "pop" on the page.
- Ask for interviews with artists coming to town. When people search for an artist, this will get major hits for your paper on-line.
- Include a fashion piece. Take a picture of a student and explain why they are fashionable. Very popular with the guys as they are less fashion savvy.
- A Save vs. Splurge feature. Cheap vs. Expensive – is it worth it?
- Do Not Eat This Blog is a food blog that features a staffer cooking with local newsmakers.
- Be original and take your own photos. Don't use stock photos. Original photos generate excitement for the readers which generates more readers which generates ad dollars.

News writing/Opinion

- We put the spotlight on areas our audience should know about but aren't necessarily too familiar with – like medical topics, news drugs affecting our age group, etc.
- We have genuine staff editorials with established editorial board meetings.
- Make sure you secure press passes for staffers. They are usually easier to get for political gigs since the politicians are reaching out for the support of people in our age bracket (18-24).