

The structure and workings of a publishing house

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Introduction

The title of this chapter, of course, implies that there exists, somewhere, such a thing as a standard publishing house. There doesn't. Publishing houses (I'll use that term throughout this chapter, rather than the less precise "publishers") vary tremendously. They can be enormous or tiny; profitable, loss-making or not-for profit; they can be fully digital or almost entirely print-based; global in their reach or focused on a very local market; and they can be run efficiently or in a state of near chaos. For the purposes of this chapter, which is designed to outline briefly the structure and functions of a publishing house, let's create our own.

We'll call our publishing house The Ludlow Press. Although founded in the Shropshire town of that name in the late 19th century, it long ago moved its headquarters to London and now has offices there as well as in New York, Sydney and Toronto. The Ludlow Press prides itself on publishing a wide range of content. For much of the 20th century it was seen as a slightly staid publisher of serious non-fiction but following an overhaul in the mid-1980s, the press expanded into more commercial non-fiction as well as fiction, children's books, and academic books and journals. Much of this growth came via acquisition.

As we near the end of the second decade of this century, The Ludlow Press is seen as a well-run business that has adapted nimbly to the shifts of recent years. As with all publishing houses it has its strengths and vulnerabilities, but it's a press that many authors would be happy to publish with and that a decent number of readers recognise.

In this chapter, we'll work through – in no particular order – the various departments and teams that can exist at a publishing house like The Ludlow Press. Bear in mind that other medium-sized or large publishing houses will not mirror these departments and structures exactly, and that at many small presses all of these functions are handled by just one or two staff.

Senior Management

The Ludlow Press has a Board of Directors as well as a Senior Management team – it's the latter we'll concentrate on here. The team consists of seven people: the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who is a descendant of the Press's founder, and six other senior staff members. The make-up of those six is interesting: three occupy editorial positions (the heads of Trade, Children's and Academic publishing respectively) while the other three are drawn from Sales, Production and Finance. This imbalance in a senior team isn't unusual (of the 16 members of Hachette Book Group's US leadership team in 2017, for example, 8 have worked their way up through editorial careers - <http://www.hachettebookgroup.com/about/leadership/> accessed Aug 2, 2017) and reflects a belief system in the industry that very experienced, senior editorial staff are more likely to have a clear overview of the business and its strategic needs than senior staff who have risen through the ranks of other departments.

The key function of the Senior Management team at The Ludlow Press is to provide a strategic vision for the company – and to communicate that vision to all staff. On top of that, the team is

responsible for setting overall (for the Press as a whole) and specific (for each Division of the Press) targets for each financial year. The team meets on a monthly basis to monitor progress against those targets, and to discuss longer-term projects or initiatives which could range from ideas for possible acquisitions (of other publishers or imprints) to plans for a major overhaul of the Press's online presence.

Across the industry, Senior Management teams vary considerably in terms of how they convey their goals, vision, and corporate ethos to staff. In some publishing houses there is transparency around financial performance; in others, much less so. Some houses arrange regular "all staff" meetings at which Senior Management offer short presentations on developments in their areas – others leave this up to individual teams. Either way, it's imperative for staff morale that a publishing house's Senior Management team are seen to be accessible, communicative and strategically ambitious.

Audio

Given the steady rise in popularity of audiobooks and the increasing desire of publishing houses to fill their social media channels with high quality, well produced content including book trailers and author interviews, there is a trend to invest in audio / video facilities. Such an investment is under consideration at The Ludlow Press. Currently, though, the Press makes do by licensing its content to specialist audiobook companies (**see the section on Subsidiary Rights, below**) and by asking staff (usually in Publicity or Marketing) to use phones or tablets to create other audio and video content in-house.

Marketing

"Marketing plays a full role in the development of new projects, from coming up with new ideas and commenting on editors' proposals to market testing new projects during their development. Marketing will also be involved in commenting on the book's title (including any subtitle) and other textual elements to maximize search engine optimization (SEO) and discoverability; its genre or subject classification; cross-marketing opportunities with other titles; and the cover design and how it works with the target market." (Clark and Phillips, p.227)

The Marketing department is a core team in any publishing house. Put crudely, there's no point in publishing a book unless you're able to back it up with parallel activity designed to alert potential customers to that book's existence. (Note the use of the word "customers": in some types of academic publishing in particular, marketing efforts may be focused upon institutions like libraries rather than on individual "readers".)

For any Marketing team, the first job is to identify key audiences for a book and then to create appropriate communications to get the book ready for outreach to those audiences, who can include the press's own sales reps, booksellers, librarians and individual consumers. Successful marketing develops collaborations and partnerships with a range of influencers and other brands, through paid placement (including advertising) and by getting books in to non-traditional outlets.

Every publishing house is different, of course. At The Ludlow Press, the Marketing teams build and implement social media campaigns, while in other houses that's the role of the Publicity team (**see the section on Publicity, below**). The work of marketers and publicists is connected

in many ways – perhaps the simplest way of thinking about them is this: marketing is what *publishing houses* say about their books and authors, while Publicity is what *others* say.

There are stark differences between how trade and academic sides of publishing conceive of and carry out marketing activities. On the trade side, the overall aim is to produce campaigns that will grab the attention of consumers, drive sales and build upon an author's profile. This means developing long-term strategies for existing brands and creating plans for newer authors and brands. Marketing activity doesn't kick off around the time of publication, of course: often it starts months earlier with "pre-awareness" campaigns designed to maximise sales in the first few days and weeks of a book's published life.

In their study of publishing houses' use of social media, Criswell and Canty observe just how early this marketing activity can begin. With regard to the Stephen King novel *The Wind Through the Keyhole*, for example, the first mention of the book was in 2009, while King's UK publisher Hodder announced the book's publication in June 2011, a full ten months before its publication date of April 2012.

"The first mention of the book's potential existence was on the 9th November 2009 on Twitter. From this point on Hodder & Stoughton methodically released pieces of information about the upcoming title, including extracts and information on the 'StephenKingFaces' campaign, whetting fans' appetites right up to the publication date. This generated hype on social media, and influenced 2,457 tweets before the release of the Hardback on the 24th April 2012. This is an incredible achievement for Hodder & Stoughton, as they resurrected conversation about a finished series, and gathered a large, active social media audience awaiting the release of the book." (Criswell and Canty, p.369)

There is pressure on marketing staff to be innovative, given the noise that bombards consumers on a daily basis. Marketers are also expected to evaluate their campaigns to ascertain what has worked well and what hasn't. (Although of course if it were that simple, publishing houses would execute successful marketing campaigns every time. They don't.)

This leads to an intriguing question: who to blame when a book's performance doesn't meet expectations? The standard responses, in my experience, are for editorial staff to blame the marketing team (for failing to alert enough readers to a book's existence) or the sales team (for failing to get a book into retail outlets in big enough quantities to be visible); while marketing and sales staff tend to blame the editorial team (because a book simply wasn't good or distinctive enough, or for failing to provide good quality supporting information about the book in a timely manner, or for signing up an author who proved to be unhelpful in terms of promotional effort). If left unchecked, these attitudes can be problematic. It's important, therefore, for a publishing house to run regular post-mortem exercises on key titles – at The Ludlow Press, this doesn't happen, leading to occasional flare-ups between the teams.

In scholarly and professional publishing, marketing activities need to be more precisely defined. In the Academic Division of The Ludlow Press, for example, much of this focus stems from a database of customer contacts which has been built up over several years and requires considerable maintenance to ensure its currency. The names, email addresses and subject specialisms of tens of thousands of scholars around the world are stored, enabling marketing staff to alert academics to the publication of a new book or series in their field. Some academic publishing houses are more aggressive in their pursuit of new contacts, using data-mining techniques (either in-house or freelanced out) to add scholars to their databases. (The vast majority of academics display this information on their institution's website so the data is not hard to find.) Other publishing houses are more careful – wary of data protection laws – and ask

people to “opt in” to mailing lists via pop-ups on their website and via conversations at conferences or on campus.

Two other key tasks for marketing staff in academic publishing are to send books out for review and to attend specialist scholarly conferences. Finding suitable review outlets for academic books can be challenging – textbooks, for example, rarely get reviewed anywhere. While there are potentially dozens of journals in any given subject area there are still more books being published than can be reviewed, and even when a review is assigned by a journal it can often be a year or two before it’s published. (By which time everyone at the publishing house has moved on to hundreds of newer titles.) Academic books with higher profile authors do get reviewed, though, and a positive review in the *New York Review of Books* or *Times Literary Supplement* can drive sales so marketing staff work hard to foster good relationships with such outlets. In terms of academic conferences, these can range from very small affairs with just a couple of hundred attendees to huge meetings at which 10,000 scholars converge on a city to network, present papers, and browse the book exhibit. It’s the role of marketing staff (and sometimes editorial colleagues too) to work on the publishing house’s booth selling books, meeting with scholars, developing contacts, listening to book ideas and to be seen as a serious publisher in that field.

Publicity

“Media outlets need content, and books, authors and writing provides good copy and material for book and culture programmes. Small publishers often fail to take advantage of this, or don’t know how to exploit it, while big publishers have departments dedicated to chasing down every promotional opportunity.” (Guthrie, p.177)

The goal of the Publicity team is to persuade people outside of the publishing house to generate noise about its books and authors – and ideally to modulate that noise so it conveys an upbeat and positive message. (The old adage “all publicity is good publicity” may well be true, but negative publicity is never good for an author’s ego.) Publicity staff, either in-house or external – there are a large number of talented and experienced freelance book publicists who do a lot of work for smaller and medium-sized houses – set up author events at bookshops and other venues including libraries, museums, and book festivals. They send out – either physically or electronically – advance proof copies, letters and lists of talking points to print, online, and broadcast media. There is a great deal of follow-up work involved. Publicists must strike a difficult balance, being dogged and thorough without irritating their media contacts.

Publicity staff need good social skills. They organize lunches and parties where media contacts can meet authors, and sometimes set up drinks to talk through forthcoming lists with their contacts. (The quality of those contacts is, of course, crucial to the success and value of any book publicist.)

The Publicity team works very closely with authors, helping them find effective ways to talk about their books. Some authors need a lot of help with this, others none at all. Either way, it’s fair to say that on the Trade side of publishing, the relationship between publicist and author can be a close one, especially during the frenzied month or two around publication. It’s a publicist who’ll accompany an author to do a major radio interview, and a publicist who can offer support (or sympathetically absorb an author’s diatribe) when a bookshop event only attracts four customers.

Operations

In some publishing houses, the Operations Department is closely intertwined with the Production team while in others it's less so. Fundamentally, the staff who work in Operations lubricate the machinery of the publishing engine, to ensure that systems are working efficiently and smoothly. A lot of Operations effort takes place behind the scenes: it's one of the least glamorous departments in a publishing house, and yet without it the whole enterprise would collapse.

Senior staff in Operations liaise with colleagues in Sales and Production on a regular basis and are also the key point of contact with warehouses and distributors. It's their role to keep on top of even the most mundane items (for example, keeping shipping policies up to date), to maximise efficiencies around stock turnover – and it is normal practice to have several very large projects running concurrently in this department. Senior Operations staff need to have a deep knowledge of the publishing process across all market sectors, and good knowledge of the full range of systems used by the press and its distribution partners.

One of the central roles with an Operations team is that of inventory manager. This is a core function at any publishing house – from the smallest (where it would be one part of a much broader role) to the largest (where there might be several inventory managers, each dedicated to a different imprint or division of the company). Any inventory manager needs a sharp mind and exceptional attention to detail. On any given day, an inventory manager might be: monitoring customer orders against estimates and making any necessary adjustments to print quantities; studying daily or weekly sales data from key accounts to ascertain if inventory levels are sufficient to meet demand for more stock; recommending reprints of frontlist titles as required; checking stock of hundreds (or thousands) of backlist titles; prompting reprint discussions for weekly or monthly reprint meetings; pulling together remainder and overstock lists for distribution to colleagues in Sales and Editorial departments, or acting as the primary point of contact for warehouse personnel. When this role is performed well it can make a real difference to the bottom line, and prevent key titles from being unavailable for a few days – which can then lead to irate editors, authors, agents, and more.

Subsidiary Rights

Being part of a publishing house's Rights team typically requires very strong communication and negotiation skills and a sensitivity to both customer and author care. Even at more junior levels, there can be considerable overseas travel involved and the ability to speak more than one language is seen as a desirable skill. Some of the biggest book fairs in the world are, in no particular order:

Abu Dhabi International Book Fair

London Book Fair

Frankfurt Book Fair

Book Expo America

The Hong Kong Book Fair

Guadalajara International Book Fair

Cairo International Book Fair

Bologna Children's Book Fair

Tehran International Book Fair

Book Expo Australia

Shanghai Book Fair

As Lynette Owen observes in her classic text *Selling Rights*, the necessity of attending book fairs (with their attendant preparatory and follow-up work) can create additional pressures which are unique to the Rights Department in a publishing house:

Rights work usually involves seasonal pressure, with the majority of book fairs concentrated in the spring and autumn each year. Considerable patience, diplomacy, physical and mental stamina, and adaptability will allow the same rights person to move from the comparatively leisurely pace and gastronomic delights of Bologna in March to the less than perfect physical conditions of Moscow or Beijing in September, closely followed by the rigours of Frankfurt in October. The working conditions may vary but the role of the rights person is the same – to achieve rights sales on the best possible terms to appropriate partners. (Owen, p.66)

The goal of the dozens of meetings that a Rights Manager can have at a big book fair is to sell translation rights to overseas publishers – who could be based in South Korea, Poland, Brazil, Sweden, the UAE, Thailand, Italy, Lithuania or almost any other nation that has its own thriving publishing industry. But the selling of translation rights is only one aspect of a Rights team's function. Particularly in the area of trade publishing – although some of these can occasionally apply to academic and professional books – staff are also looking to sell:

- English language territorial rights – for a UK publisher, this could mean selling the rights to another publisher in the US, Canada, South Africa or Australia. If the book is agented, it's likely that the agent will retain those rights to sell herself; if the publishing house owns world rights and has its own international distribution networks then the calculation needs to be made as to whether more profit will be generated by publishing the work in those territories itself or by selling the rights to a publishing house which may be better suited to exploiting the book in that country or region. The agented American writer Colson Whitehead's multi-award-winning 2016 novel *The Underground Railroad*, for example, was published in the US by Penguin Random House and in the UK by Hachette.
- Serial rights – this involves selling excerpts from a book to a newspaper or magazine. Rights staff need to maintain good contacts with their counterparts at those media outlets in order to increase the publishing house's chances of securing such a deal – which can be lucrative both in terms of revenue and publicity.
- Anthology and quotation rights – otherwise known as “permissions,” this is where another publisher asks to reproduce material from one of the press's books. Particularly in academic publishing and with poetry, this can generate decent additional income. Change is beginning to be felt now in scholarly publishing as increasing numbers of authors want their work to be freely available online (Open Access publishing) – so many permissions queries now come from a press's own authors, asking if they can upload the complete text of their work to an institutional repository or other online platform. Editorial and Rights staff are having to construct clear policies around this.
- Audio rights – as the audiobook market continues to grow, there is more revenue to be made from selling audio rights. Some bigger publishing houses have developed their own

audio imprints. In the US, Audible is the biggest player in the audiobook market and has been a subsidiary of Amazon since 2008.

- TV, film, radio and stage rights – these rights are much more likely to be retained by the author’s agent. If the author doesn’t have an agent and didn’t kick up a fuss at contract stage, then they will belong to the publishing house. There is serious money to be made, of course, in selling film or TV rights, not to mention the boost in sales which can accompany any eventual release. (Think *Game of Thrones* or *The Martian*.) Very often, film rights to a book will be optioned – perhaps several times – only for the proposed film to fall into production limbo and never see the light of day. Jonathan Franzen’s *The Corrections*, for example, has been optioned for both film and television since 2002 but hasn’t yet been made.
- Book club rights – since their peak in the late 20th century, book clubs have now diminished significantly in terms of their market share due to increasingly competitive retail discounting and online sales. Many publishing houses now view sales to book clubs as an opportunity to be handled by the Sales Department instead of by Rights.
- Paperback rights – as with book club rights deals, this is an area which has seen a decline since the 1980s when many publishing houses consolidated and most specialist paperback presses became divisions or imprints of larger companies. It is now typical, then, for a book that’s published in hardcover initially to be published the following year in paperback by the same company. So Jesse Ball’s 2016 novel *How to Set a Fire and Why* was published in hardcover in the US by Pantheon Books, then in paperback in 2017 by Vintage: both are imprints of Penguin Random House.

Given all of this potential activity, it’s imperative that members of the Rights team communicate both internally (with colleagues) and externally (with agents and authors). Selling rights well can be an excellent way of boosting revenues for the company and the author, and can play a vital role in persuading the author that he should stick with the publishing house for future books.

Finance

In very basic terms, the role of the Finance department is to keep track of the money being spent by the business and the money coming in to the business. Ideally there will be more of the latter and the numbers will show an increase over the prior year – if that’s not the case, the Finance team will then be expected to come up with creative ways of making those disappointing numbers look as positive as possible.

To be more precise, the purchase ledger team deals with incoming invoices and payments from printers, booksellers, distributors and so on, while the royalties team deals with payments to authors and agents. If an advance against future royalties has been paid (standard practice in trade publishing, much less so in academic and professional publishing), the royalties team needs to monitor sales so that if the advance is ever earned out – and there are many, many books where this never happens – then the correct remuneration is paid to the author. Bear in mind that an author can earn money not only from book sales but from the sale of serial rights, translation rights, film rights and more. There are vast numbers of transactions needing to be tracked in order to ensure authors are paid accurately, hence larger publishing houses need to invest in robust and complex royalties and sales reporting systems and in the staff to deal with the resulting work. It’s worth mentioning, perhaps, that this work can often be thankless: at The

Ludlow Press, it's rare for an author (or her editor or agent) to contact the royalties team to express gratitude for a prompt and accurate payment; while it's not unusual for an author (or her editor or agent) to complain – often vigorously and repeatedly – about a late, inaccurate or confusing payment.

Other key functions of the Finance team are budgeting and evaluating performance against those forecasts. As publishing houses have grown, the task of setting budgets and monitoring performance has become increasingly complex. At the Ludlow Press there is an overall budget created for the financial year and within that it's possible to see quarterly, monthly, weekly and even daily forecasts for each Division. The role of the Finance team isn't simply to provide that data to management staff but also to analyse and interpret the data. Working with colleagues in Sales, Marketing, Editorial and Production, the Finance team could be asked to explain why the backlist numbers in children's picture books are down by 14% compared to prior year, or why revenues from academic monographs are up by 7% in North America despite lower \$US prices having been implemented (by the Operations team) due to a shift in the exchange rate. Key staff in the Finance team need to have sharp analytical skills and a deep understanding of how the broader publishing industry works. They may also be asked to produce monthly written reports for senior management – reports which outline the numbers against budget and previous years and which pick up on anomalies and trends, helping management to predict financial performance over the rest of the financial year.

Editorial

The Editorial departments at The Ludlow Press are responsible for bringing in the books that the Press will publish. Whether it's a new cookbook or a new YA detective fiction series or a new economics textbook, all of this content is first discovered, assessed and then brought to a Publishing Meeting by individual editors. All editors at the Press have targets to hit each year: these vary by Division and by the relative seniority of the staff member but are based on the number of new projects each editor brings in and the projected value of those projects.

The typical hierarchy of an Editorial department looks like this, in order of descending seniority:

Publishing Director – Editorial Director – Senior Publisher – Publisher – Senior Editor – Editor – Assistant Editor – Editorial Assistant

Each team of editors and assistants reports in to an Editorial Director, and those Editorial Directors report to a Publishing Director. At The Ludlow Press, the three Publishing Directors (for Adult books, Children's books and Academic books) sit on the Senior Management team.

Acquiring or commissioning books (acquiring being the term used more commonly in the US than the UK and implying a financial transaction on the part of the publishing house which isn't always the case – not all books have a royalty advance attached to them) isn't the only function of the Editorial Department. Once any new title has been commissioned and the contract signed, editors and their assistants are also responsible for what is broadly termed “author care” – keeping in touch with the author during the writing process, which could be a few weeks, a few months or a few years. (Some projects are acquired when the manuscript is already completed, of course.) All authors are different and while some are happy to write with no assistance or support from the publishing house at all, others prefer plenty of hand-holding. This is where assistant-level staff, in particular, can learn the key skills of cajoling, motivating and guiding

authors through what can be a challenging time. The aim of author care is twofold: first, it's to provide the author with an impressive level of service so that she'll tell her friends and peers how wonderful the publishing house is; second, it's to encourage the author to deliver his manuscript on time. Any such delays can have profound impacts upon a publishing house's financial performance.

Once the manuscript is delivered by the author, it is the role of the Editorial team to read it and then propose any structural changes to the author. Authors respond in many different ways to such edits – while some are happy to have their work altered by publishers in this way, others are less so. (And there are occasional interjections from literary agents to complicate / ameliorate matters.) Structural editing varies from publisher to publisher and even internally. While editors on the trade side have more time to do this type of work, their counterparts in academic publishing typically don't. (Academic books on the whole generate less revenue per title so editors need to publish many more of them to justify their existence – and if an editor is working on 30-50 titles per year then there's not the time to edit each manuscript.)

When the final version of the manuscript is agreed upon by editor and author, it's the role of the Editorial team to hand it over to colleagues in Production or Managing Editorial for copy-editing, typesetting, proofreading and indexing. At The Ludlow Press, editors are required to “transmit” each manuscript to the Production team in a formal meeting. Detailed forms need to be filled out and conversations need to be had about text design, the quality of any images to be used in the book, the level of copy-editing required, schedules, author availability to answer questions, and much more. These meetings are generally collegial and constructive although if the editor is unprepared or the manuscript appears sloppy or to be missing some elements they can break down – it's an unspoken rule at The Ludlow Press that Production has the right to “abandon” any such meeting in which case the editor must retreat to his desk, do some more preparation, and request another meeting. The point of this is not so that editors can be put in their place (although this is sometimes how the Editorial team sees it...) but so that Production staff have the precise information they need in order to shepherd each book through the process as efficiently as possible.

All of this is for one individual title. Editors need to work on that level, of course – but they also need to commission books more strategically. Many would argue that the true measure of any editor or Editorial team is in *list building* – the idea that, over a period of years, it's possible to build up a portfolio of books with its own identity, its own innate sense of quality, so that readers in a particular market segment come to trust that publisher or imprint, and the best authors in that field will want to work with the editor or team in question.

“A set of titles that presents a defined genre or subject to a specific audience will have a greater value than one which simply aggregates disparate titles. Successful lists attract both authors and readers, and marketing a list is often more cost-effective with cross-marketing opportunities between titles.”

(Clark and Phillips, p.139)

Contracts

The work of the Contracts department (note that many smaller publishing houses don't have a dedicated team for this and typically rely on editors, rights staff and senior management to ensure that contracts are handled correctly) seems simple at first glance but can often be

complicated. It is important work: a publishing house's future financial health is dependent on the robustness of the contracts by which its Intellectual Property has been secured.

At The Ludlow Press, once an editor has made a broad offer for a book and that offer is accepted by the author/agent, a member of the Contracts team will pull together a contract – almost always based on one of many templates stored by the press. (If the book is represented by an agency with which the publishing house does a lot of business, there will be a template for this, too, with agency-specific language that may have been agreed years ago.) These templates are important and are regularly checked and updated to ensure that they reflect the most recent industry developments.

The Contracts team sends a draft of the contract to the agent or author – if it's based on a template the agent has seen before, of course, there shouldn't be much to argue about. This draft comes back with comments and suggested changes, and the process goes back and forth. As a rule, any questions or disputes are handled by the Contracts team. Occasionally, issues arise that need to be referred (perhaps to a senior member of the Editorial team, for a second opinion) or escalated (to the Legal team or senior management).

The next phase, once the contract has been fully agreed, is to get it signed. (Often this is done via email but some publishing houses still prefer mailing out hard copies.) An agented book requires three signing copies: one for the author, one for the agent, and one for the publisher. It's the job of the Contracts team to send these out to the appropriate party, tracking them to make sure none fall through the cracks, and chasing up where necessary. Most publishing houses still ask for handwritten signatures instead of digital, for legal reasons. Once the signed copies come back, they are checked (for any last minute tweaks) and then counter-signed – usually by an authorized signer such as a Publishing Director, Finance Director, or member of the Senior Management team. After that's been done, the fine detail of the contract (particular sub-rights, royalties, delivery schedules, etc) needs to be confirmed and checked on the relevant internal database so that staff from all other departments can quickly access the relevant information on each book. Many publishing systems now allow for the scanning and uploading of the signed contract, too.

It can take two days or several months to shepherd one book contract through to completion. The Contracts department needs staff who are skilled negotiators, good communicators, knowledgeable about the industry, and meticulously organized.

With the proliferation of digital content, a newer role is now becoming standard at larger publishing houses – that of anti-piracy manager or controller. This can fall under the remit of the Rights team, or the Legal team, or Contracts. The role involves monitoring file-sharing and social media sites and following up on instances of piracy reported by authors or their agents. The internet is awash with illegally posted book content and there's clearly an audience looking for it (try typing in to Google the title of almost any book and see how popular the search for a PDF of that title is) – although there has been little research so far around the actual negative impact of this pirated content on publishing houses' revenues.

Human Resources

Rarely discussed but crucial to the success of any publishing house is the Human Resources team. This can, of course, range from one person (or even half a person) at a small company to a

team of several dedicated HR staff at a large publishing house. The key responsibilities of the HR team – as in many other industries – are in helping with the recruitment of staff; ensuring that wages are paid in an orderly and reliable manner; making sure that the correct legal processes are followed when staff leave the company, voluntarily or otherwise; and helping to provide training and career development guidance wherever possible.

Publishing houses vary tremendously in the types and levels of training they offer their staff. In the past, this has perhaps been seen as an unnecessary expense, based on an assumption that if staff are bright enough (which of course they all are, since they work in publishing...) then they can learn on the job. Given that publishing now is more complex and more competitive than it has ever been, senior management have realised that commercial advantages can be gained by allocating time and money to enabling staff to reach their full potential.

In terms of recruitment, the HR team has a key role to play. At The Ludlow Press, entry-level positions in Marketing, Editorial or Production may receive hundreds of applications – no matter how stringent the criteria listed in the job ad. Typically, the HR team will have the task of whittling these applications down to a handful of candidates to be interviewed, and those interviews will either be conducted by HR or by the relevant department, or by a combination of the two. The whittling process, as innocent as it sounds, can have a key impact on the eventual demographic make-up of the publishing house and the industry more widely. The publishing industry has started to make a lot of noise over the last ten years about its desire to increase diversity, and it is HR teams who are in pole position to turn these words into actions. Although as we can see from a 2016 article in *Publishers Weekly*, pole position doesn't necessarily equate to full control:

One alternative, according to a Big Five [in terms of US publishing] HR exec, is for companies to create internal targets around diversity hiring. Acknowledging that people “get very nervous talking about quotas,” she said a company can instead “set internal targets it aspires to hit.” To implement these targets, she thinks big publishers should rely on their key executives to see to it that the hiring plan is “enforceable.” Employees can even be incentivized to hit certain goals with things like bonuses.

“Human resources can't do this in a vacuum,” the HR exec said, adding that it can be particularly difficult to bring up the issue of diversity to executives who are successfully overseeing their corners of the business. “They'll say, ‘Everything is running smoothly, so why are you telling me diversity is a problem?’” (PublishersWeekly.com, accessed Aug 2nd 2017)

In the UK, organisations such as Creative Access are working to address the issue of diversity and have partnered with several of the biggest publishing houses specifically by placing BAME interns across these companies. Internships are still one of the key routes into a publishing career, and these are often organised by the HR team. A typical internship lasts between 3 and 6 months, and it is fairly standard practice now for interns to be paid something close to an entry-level salary. Work placements, on the other hand, tend to last for a couple of weeks and often cover only travel expenses. Given that publishing is such a competitive industry to break into, work placements and internships are seen as important ways of gaining experience and making connections.

Information Technology:

The Information Technology (I.T.) department is one of the core teams of any modern publishing house. I.T. now permeates every aspect of the book publishing process. Even as recently as the mid-1990s it was common to find some staff working on typewriters or primitive

word processors, to see profit and loss sheets being filled in by hand, and to see a line of staff waiting to use the fax machine. Now, even the slightest glitch in a company's I.T. performance can cause staff meltdowns and potentially serious issues for the business – so publishing houses invest considerable resources in their I.T. systems, making sure they are as robust, flexible, responsive and resilient as possible.

The staff who make up an I.T. department are unusual in the book publishing world, as the majority of them know little about the publishing industry itself. They are hired instead for their expertise in specific systems, problem-solving, coding, and so on. Staff at the higher levels of the I.T. department do tend to know more about publishing-specific issues (often by osmosis over the years) but even there, it's not unusual for a publishing house to recruit a Head of I.T. from a different industry entirely.

There are many functions performed by an I.T. department, some of which are too specific (not to mention too technical!) to detail here. One of the most important is to provide an overarching I.T. service strategy for the business – because technology in this sector is so fast-moving, there is a perpetual need to identify opportunities for improvements across the organisation. The best I.T. teams establish a culture of continual improvement, communicating with staff in all other departments what is being done, and why. (The “why” is particularly key here, as some other staff in publishing are not the smartest when it comes to technology.) Best practice can involve organising monthly catch-up sessions to ensure dialogue, and ensuring that issues are followed up quickly, as well as being clear about service levels across the company – senior staff need to know, for example, that if the main sales reporting system goes down overnight, dedicated efforts will be made to get it fixed within a certain time scale. Major technology issues can happen outside of regular work hours, of course, so plans must be in place to cover any such eventualities.

Security is an increasingly important issue for I.T. teams to consider and be prepared for. Despite regular reminders (both inside and outside of the workplace), it's always possible that one member of staff will open a link sent in an unsolicited email – thus exposing the company to viruses and malware. Publishing houses store a lot of sensitive data electronically, from intellectual property itself (tens of thousands of manuscripts) to private email discussions and authors' bank details. It's true that there are more tempting targets for hackers and cyber criminals (see the Sony Pictures hack of 2014, or the British Airways frequent flyers data breach of the following year) but a publishing house's I.T. team needs to be aware of the potential issues.

For many presses, the key is to work with technology suppliers to create I.T. systems and processes that match up with the company's specific publishing profile. (A Canadian university press publishing around 100 titles a year has very different I.T. requirements from a large, global commercial press or a not-for-profit poetry press based in Michigan.) If I.T. can be intelligently applied to the submission of book proposals, the academic peer review process, production workflows and schedules, business analytics, royalties processing and payment, author care, internal and external communication, and more – then the business in question gains a competitive advantage and the costs invested in implementing and sustaining that technology can be justified.

Art and Design

The Design Department at The Ludlow Press is perhaps the most creative of all the teams. Its function, put crudely, is to make every book look as good as possible in order to maximise sales. Despite the enormous emphasis placed on editorial quality, research consistently shows that in terms of consumer purchasing decisions, an appealing cover design – and, for many segments of the non-fiction market, an appealing interior design as well – is one of the key factors and can make the difference between browsing and buying.

Motives for Book Purchasing:

Subject	25%
Author	25%
Price/offer	20%
Series	17%
Characters	11%
Cover appeal	10%

Source: *Books & Consumers* (April 2014)

(Some surveys show higher figures for cover design being a key driver, others slightly lower – but 10% seems the average. It is possible that the real figure is higher, as some of those people surveyed might not want to admit that they’re so easily swayed by a cover design.)

At The Ludlow Press, the Design team is divided across Adult, Children’s and Academic publishing: designers are considered specialists in one of these areas and are paired with certain editors and lists as a result.

In theory, the work of designing a book cover for a romance novel or a business textbook is the same; in practice, the two are rather different. In trade publishing – and with fiction in particular – it is assumed that a great cover design often stems from reading the manuscript itself.

“The design process usually involves reading the brief and maybe the book and coming up with a few ideas, which are then sent to the publisher. Sometimes all the ideas I’ve come up with are hated and sometimes one idea is accepted exactly as it is, but usually it’s somewhere between the two and it’s a case of knocking into shape whichever idea went down best until everyone’s happy. ‘Everyone’ being quite a few people at the publishing company and possibly authors, agents, bookshops and even supermarkets.”
Jamie Keenan, book cover designer (shinynewbooks.co.uk, accessed July 17th 2017)

In academic publishing, the cover is often designed in advance of the manuscript being delivered. (Does a designer really need to read and understand a dense manuscript of contemporary philosophy, for example, in order to conjure up a look for it?)

It is the responsibility of the Editorial team to write a cover brief for each book and this forms the basis for what the Design team creates. Cover briefs vary tremendously: some are detailed, full of concrete ideas and suggestions for images; while others are vague and leave much more to the Design team. (There’s an implicit assumption behind this process that all Editorial staff are visually literate enough to convey useful ideas in a cover brief. It isn’t always the case, and some briefs are considerably better than others.) Upon receiving the brief from the Editorial team, a designer usually has 3-4 weeks to come up with a range of possible visuals for the book’s front cover. These are then shared with the relevant editor. This tends to be done more informally for academic books where the cover design isn’t deemed to be quite so essential to the book’s success but more formally in trade publishing. At The Ludlow Press, for example, designers are required to present a board of visuals to a Publishing Meeting. There, colleagues from Editorial, Production, Sales and Marketing teams will respond to those visuals. Designers need to have the

resilience to withstand some fairly sharp critiques of their work. Sometimes, all initial designs are rejected; or, one is deemed to be promising and then sent away for further work. Eventually – after input from the author as well, although this can be fraught with difficulty – a final design is agreed upon and the Design team’s work is then nearly done.

At The Ludlow Press, designers are required to upload several versions of the final front cover on to the central system. Different sizes and formats of the same image are needed – for use in marketing catalogues, or to be sent to online retailers and wholesalers. These vary in size from large to very small data files for the thumbnail image versions. Cover designers have tended towards using larger type on book covers since the rise of Amazon: if you’re viewing a book cover on your phone it can often be less than one inch tall, so legibility can be a real issue. Some publishing houses are now creating different cover designs for print and electronic editions as a way of circumventing this problem, as noted in this blog post by Phoebe Morgan of HarperCollins in London:

“Sometimes, we’ll even do a different cover for the ebook, because what might look great on a shelf could easily get lost in an Amazon line-up – tiny details can be missed online.” (BookMachine.org, accessed 26 July 2017)

The spine and back cover are finished later in the process, as confirmed spine width and endorsements for the back cover sometimes aren’t received until shortly before the files are sent to press.

Production

The Production department at any publishing house is the engine that makes the entire machine tick over. Through their own endeavours and through working closely with a wide network of printers, binders, distributors, designers, typesetters, copy-editors, indexers and more, the Production team strives to turn each and every manuscript into a finished book (print or digital) that – all being well – is free of errors and has the look and feel to serve the content perfectly and justify its retail price.

At many larger publishing houses (The Ludlow Press in 2016, for example, published over 1200 new books) there are intense demands placed upon the Production department to deliver a constant flow of product efficiently and reliably. To help with this, most Production teams have developed intricate systems of scheduling which ideally are adhered to by every title – although exceptions always need to be made for last-minute projects which hold out the promise of quick revenues.

“Schedules...are a vital tool in project and production management because they allow a publisher to manage the time it takes to produce a product. But schedules do more than that. They make it necessary for Production to think through and test the logic of the entire project in terms of all its components and how they fit together before it even starts.” (Bullock, p.53)

In a very basic sense, a typical schedule follows this path:



In reality, each stage can have several potential phases of its own and the unexpected can occur at any point. The author could object to copy-edits, causing a delay; the Editorial team may have inadvertently handed over to Production a previous draft of the manuscript, causing the whole process to start again; the author could fall ill during the time she’s been allocated to check the first proofs; the index may not be up to scratch; a percentage of the books might be printed with one signature upside down; whole pallets of books could disappear *en route* from the printers to the distributor’s warehouse. All of these are rare, but all can and do happen. It’s the job of the Production team to intervene at any such points, to fix the issue and keep the project on schedule wherever possible.

For senior staff in a Production department, aside from overseeing the day-to-day business of running their teams, considerable time goes into communicating with external suppliers – particularly printers and (where used) project management companies. Publishing houses with consistently large outputs are able to leverage that critical mass of work to negotiate advantageous rates with printing companies. Some publishing houses use one dedicated printer for almost all their work; others prefer to use a range of printers either for geographical reasons or because those printers have different specialist skills. There is constant pressure to keep print costs as low as possible – at The Ludlow Press, printers are used in Hong Kong, India and Poland as well as in the US and the UK, and senior Production staff pay regular visits to these facilities to see their latest technology and negotiate the best prices. There is always a balance to be struck between obtaining the lowest print prices and ensuring that print quantities are kept at sensible levels to minimise the risk of overstock:

“With lower sales of print books, manufacturers report that publishers have become more willing to take advantages of short print runs. Publishers understand that while unit costs may be higher, producing only what they need cuts warehousing costs and lowers the risk of larger print runs not selling through. Bolstered by the latest IT systems and printing technology, book manufacturers continue to invest in ways to improve and broaden their services by offering warehousing, distribution, and even editorial and other publishing services. Digital printing is now fully incorporated among printers, especially for small-to-midsize players.” (Publishers Weekly.com, accessed July 26 2017)

Senior Production staff at The Ludlow Press have similar working relationships with the project management companies used by the press: companies which will oversee the entire process from final manuscript to the creation of digital files ready for printing or for distribution as ebooks.

Project management companies are used much more heavily in academic publishing than in trade publishing. Trade books typically have a broader readership, therefore it's seen as more important that more time and money is spent on having them shaped, designed and edited. Academic publishing houses would never express it in these terms, of course, but there is a direct correlation between the smaller readership of scholarly books and the desire – some would say necessity – to cut costs in producing them. And as dedicated and thorough as many of the project management companies are, they are able to offer cheaper rates because their staff are, on the whole, less likely to be specialists in the field. Not all scholarly publishing houses outsource their Production processes – it's less common at university presses, many of whom try to attract the best authors by touting their more “traditional” editing processes.

Digital Production

Some larger publishing houses have an entirely separate Digital Production department, reflecting the increasing importance over the last decade of ebooks and the revenues they generate. Other publishing houses, like The Ludlow Press, have dedicated Digital Production staff within the main Production department and it is the responsibility of those staff to ensure that ebook editions are produced on time and in the correct formats required by the market. If any minor errors are spotted in a book after publication, it's also industry standard now for those to be corrected immediately in the ebook edition whereas the physical edition has to wait for a second printing.

In some publishing houses these functions are performed by an ebook “Operations” team. And that team tends to own the responsibility for liaising with key ebook vendors to ensure the smooth flow of product to market. This is just for new content, of course. Many publishing houses – particularly in the academic sector – have been working for years now to digitize thousands of backlist titles so they can be offered as ebook editions to libraries and individual consumers. This has created a lot of extra work – from making sure that rights have been cleared on older titles where electronic editions may not even have been mentioned in the original contract, to creating records and metadata for each new edition – and at many publishing houses new roles have been created and new teams developed as a result.

For those publishing houses which have moved into the world of book-related apps, such work could also fall under the remit of a Digital Production team, unless it is farmed out to specialist app developers. UK-based children's publishing house Nosy Crow, for example, is well known for its work with apps such as *Cinderella* and *Jack and the Beanstalk* – although the number of apps Nosy Crow has released is tiny compared to the number of books it has published. Nosy Crow has a small Apps Development team which falls under the wing of its Digital Project team. The challenge with apps, of course, is that typically consumers are prepared to pay even less than for a paperback book:

“Nosy Crow did well from Apple's Kids category: many of its apps were featured by Apple when it went live last year. [Managing Director Kate] Wilson doesn't shirk questions about children's apps as a business though, admitting that it remains hard work for any publisher focusing on paid book-apps rather than games with in-app purchases. “The tough thing is that a lot of people expect everything for nothing, or at

least for very little. At the moment, it's hard to say that the price these apps are commanding is a reflection for the effort, expertise and thought that goes into them,' she says. (TheGuardian.com/uk, accessed July 21st 2017)

Other publishing houses have chosen to work with app developers on more premium level content – Faber and Bloomsbury, for example, worked with Touch Press to develop the apps for *The Wasteland* and *Shakespeare's Sonnets* respectively, which retail at prices that are more in line with a full-priced paperback book.

Sales

The primary goal of the Sales Department in any publishing house is to ensure that beneficial relationships are created and maintained with a vast array of potential customers for the company's content: from a global giant like Amazon to national chains such as Barnes & Noble or Waterstones, and from a small independent bookshop in Colorado to a supermarket chain in New Zealand, a museum gift store in the Lake District or an academic library supplier in Japan. It is through these relationships that sales opportunities can be developed, explored and built upon. A career in Sales is not for the faint-hearted: there is constant pressure for growth and results are scrutinised on a daily basis at many publishing houses – but for those who thrive under pressure, like to negotiate and enjoy being the public face of an organisation, working in Sales can be highly rewarding.

An early career role in a Sales Department often has a particular focus, which could mean supporting sales efforts to the key accounts in the publishing house's "home" territory, or working to increase digital sales efforts, or supporting commission reps or sales agents in export territories.

A lot of time is spent obtaining and collating the relevant information needed to sell to customers, and on the flipside it's vital for sales staff to respond quickly to any queries from those customers. Sales kits and customer presentations need to be pulled together – at The Ludlow Press, various sales teams and international partners work on different selling schedules; a large part of the Department's work involves keeping on top of who needs which information on which titles at any given time. Centralised database systems help with this, of course, but there is always plenty of detailed, bespoke sales material to create and provide.

Further up the ladder in a Sales Department, staff can have a great deal of influence over much more than sales numbers. Senior staff are involved in publishing strategy and often work closely with colleagues from other teams including Marketing and Editorial in particular. At The Ludlow Press it's often the Sales team who have the strongest opinions in the weekly Publishing Meetings. While it's the job of editors to present each new project with passion, conviction and enthusiasm, it's easy for that positivity to spiral out of control. (Some editors are very experienced and skilled at presenting a new project backed up by carefully selected evidence.) Senior Sales staff act as a counterpoint – not by criticising proposals so vigorously that they get rejected (although that does and occasionally should happen) but by asking the right questions and checking the project from every angle: does the author have a sales track record that can be analysed? Has the editor included the most relevant and recent competing titles from other publishers – and if so, how did they perform in the market? Even if the topic and author are ideal, is the project in an area where the publishing house has the right sales and marketing profile to do it justice? Is the editor's suggested title and subtitle sharp enough? Does the

project's sales potential justify the advance that's needed to acquire the book from the agent? All of these questions are key to effective publishing decisions being made, and it is often Sales staff who drive those discussions forward.

In a larger publishing house, a great many Sales staff spend the majority of their time outside of the main office. Sales reps are a very important part of the mix. Smaller publishing houses often don't have the resources to employ full-time field reps, so instead they hire commission reps to do this work on their behalf. Either way, sales reps can offer not only the dynamism and geographical coverage to get more books into the marketplace but also valuable feedback on forthcoming titles:

“The final factor that helps [publishers] come up with their priority titles is feedback from the sales reps. The sales reps are not just selling: they are also the eyes and ears of the corporation in the world of the publisher's most immediate customers, the bookstores and the retail chains. ‘We have an electronic bulletin board,’ continued Tom. ‘We've got all these reps out there meeting buyers and giving manuscripts and galleys to booksellers and things bubble up to the surface. All of a sudden we may get a sense that the buyers and booksellers like a particular book and that we should make it a priority.’” (Thomson, pp. 190-91.)

There are many other functions performed by members of a Sales Department – too many to mention here in detail. They would include the pursuit of “special sales” (bulk sales to organisations, usually at a very high discount) and the monitoring and negotiation of discounts with a range of retailers – negotiations which can be fraught and combative.

Conclusion:

These fifteen departments or teams, as noted at the start of this chapter, vary across the industry. They all describe functions that any publishing house needs to perform – or at the very least consider – if it is to succeed. Some of the teams work closely together on a daily basis (Production and Operations, or Sales and Publicity) while others are more separate in their objectives; either way, I hope this chapter provides a quick grounding in the structure of a publishing house and the sometimes complex relationships that enable it to operate.

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