



Zines

Allen Harrison

Zines cover a spectrum of topics, from fanzines about the latest Buffy episode, to instructional zines about stealing copies from Kinkos, to personal zines about the adventures of substitute teaching. This eclectic discourse nourishes the creation of subcultures. With an estimated 25,000 titles in existence, zines have become a socially significant force. Few zine publishers make monetary profit from their work, yet they invest considerable amounts of money and time publishing their projects. Zines sustain a spirit of independence and an often confrontational relationship with mainstream media.

WHY PUBLISH? Publishing is fun: it involves collaboration, writing, creativity, artwork, and getting surprise packages in the mail. Zines help zine makers connect with interesting people sharing a common interest. Zinesters use the conferences and the Internet to form and coordinate underground networks that link zine makers around the world. The zine community is rooted in the concept of trade. Many zine makers trade their zines for other zines, using their publications as a form of currency and a tool for networking.

PLANNING YOUR ZINE

- What type of zine will you create (personal, political, artist-made)?
- Will there be a theme? Planning an overall topic and attitude for your writings will help create a cohesive zine.
- What is your budget?
- Who is your audience?
- Who will contribute content?
- How many copies will you make?
- What is your schedule for writing, editing, designing, printing, and distributing your zine?
- What are your output options (home printer, copy center, fax machine, e-mail)?

PROMOTING YOUR ZINE

- Create a web site that promotes and sells your zine. Use Paypal or CCnow to handle credit card and processing if you don't have a merchant account.
- Collect e-mail addresses and create an e-newsletter promoting your project.
- Attend zine events and lecture at workshops.
- Create stickers, buttons, patches, flyers, and postcards.
- Work with other zines; trade ads, reviews, etc.
- Have a release party.
- Create a free content sampler.
- Contact local and national press related to zines.
- Create cool giveaways (stickers, pencils, coasters).

FRICION MAGAZINE

Design: Allen Harrison
Cover photography:
Melissa Hostetler
Still life photograph:
Nancy Froehlich



SHORT-RUN PUBLICATION

up to 1000 copies

LAYOUT Do you have access to a computer? Many zinesters still use a traditional cut-and paste method for producing layouts.

PAGE STRUCTURE Consider using a basic grid to bring order to your pages. (See our NEWSLETTER chapter for more information about grids.)

TYPOGRAPHY Less is often more when working with type faces. Choose a type family with varying weights to create heirarchy and contrast for your page. Devise a system of headers, decks, body copy, and footers to achieve a consistent look throughout your zine.

IMAGES Choose imagery that helps tell the story. Avoid violating copyright laws by using your own art or work by people you know.

TRIM SIZE The format of a short-run zine is usually derived from a standard letter- or legal-sized page. For example, a quarter-sheet zine (4 1/4 x 5 1/2 inches) is based on 8 1/2-x-11-inch stock.

BINDING Many short-run zines are stapled through the inside seam (saddle-wired). This can be done by a copy center or commercial printer, or you can do it yourself with a long-necked stapler available from an office supplier. (See our book chapters for more binding ideas.)

COVER STOCK You can choose cover stock from your local copy center, but you will be able to find more interesting (and economical) materials by searching on-line for overstocked paper. A local printer may have leftover paper you can use.

PRINT PRODUCTION Laser printing is the highest-quality reproduction method for short-run printing. Photocopying works well from cut-and-paste layouts. Put your spreads together so that they will come out in the right order when they are printed back to back and stapled together. (See our NEWSLETTER chapter for more information on printer's spreads). When you have all your copies made, have a pizza party and get your friends to help assemble your zine.

THIS IS THE ZINE: Rutger Wolfson

ON THE VERGE OF SUMMER: Rachel Hartman

PRAXIS: Jason Kucsma

PENSACOLA: Candy

CREMEFILLED: Jessica

7 THINGS TO CONSIDER

WHAT IS THE FOCUS?

Why do you WANT TO MAKE A ZINE?

how will you distribute your zine?

Would you continue to do it if nobody bought it?

Will you TAKE WRITING AND ART CONTRIBUTIONS?

how will you produce the zine?

IS IT WORTH YOUR TIME AND MONEY?



MEDIUM-RUN PUBLICATION

1,000 to 5,000 copies

Like many zines, *Friction* magazine started as a side project during college. After creating three print issues ranging from 250 to 1,000 copies, the editors decided to take our publication to the Web in 2001. Publishing on the Web, *Friction* accumulated close to 400 articles, a great core of talent, and a steady audience within two years. The Web site was used to conduct a survey with readers and contributors to see if there would be interest in a print version of the magazine. The response was positive, so *Friction* created a print version that featured the best work of its most promising and consistent contributors.

PUBLISHING A MEDIUM-RUN ZINE

- Work with your illustrators and photographers to develop an overall look and feel for the magazine that will compliment the artwork. Their input will help build a sense of community around the project.
- Find a printing company with previous D.I.Y. zine experience. Using word-of-mouth recommendations, contact several printers and look at samples of their work.
- Get bids (printing estimates) from a few different printers. Printers can advise you on the paper stock for content pages and

for the cover. The price of printing your zine will be affected by your choice of paper and use of color.

- If you want your zine to be distributed to bookstores, you will need a UPC barcode or an ISBN number. Do a search on the Internet for Web sites that provide instant barcodes or ISBN numbers in EPS format for download.
- Advertising can be a crucial source of revenue. Make a list of potential advertisers (record labels, distributors, Web sites, bands) that have ties to your audience.

- Design postcards with ad rates, sizes, and deadlines, and send them to potential advertisers. A sales representative can work on commission and help you create extra materials such as one-sheets and giveaways.

- Assemble a list of independent bookstores and zine distributors to whom you can send promotional copies with a terms document. Some stores will buy copies from you outright; others will sell them on consignment.

FRICION MAGAZINE

Design: Allen Harrison

Cover illustration:

Rama Hughes

Still life photograph:

Dan Meyers

Interviews

Leia Bell

Nicholas Blechman

Matthew Peterson

Christopher Sleboda

Todd St. John

Nolen Strals and Bruce Willen

Speak Up

Interviewed by Josh Malinow