

UNDERSTANDING

YOUR ROLE

Here are some overview job descriptions to help you see yearbook's myriad responsibilities, divided into four parts.

Adviser as CEO

You oversee all of your financial records. This means setting up your accounting system for book and ad sales. Part of this process will be choosing whether you'll have tiered pricing changes. As you get the hang of how things work, these are tasks you can delegate. If you take cash or checks in your classroom, don't delegate the receipting process until you have students you trust. You'll learn yearbook is about learning what you can delegate, when and to whom.

Adviser as educator

As the educator, yearbook is as much a microcosm of real-world business life as you choose to make it. The perfect incubator of executive-level reasoning and 21st century or "passion-based" learning, you can make your program one of the most challenging academic experiences your school provides.

You'll teach your students not only to write for an audience from original research (a much different skill than English assignments), but also editing, leadership, layout and design, photography, desktop publishing software and business management, all while building a sense of accountability and maturity.

Yearbook should be treated just like any other part-time job. Staffers have to show up.

They have to do what the boss says by the deadline. Then they are rewarded. Make your grading easy to maintain. Keep it flexible since all yearbookers are different, and they learn and work at different levels and at different paces.

Adviser as production manager

There are countless ways to be successful and countless ways to run your yearbook business. Choose the one which works best for your staff and your circumstances. Don't be surprised if you, like everyone else, experiment with many different approaches. Sometimes within the same year. Sometimes within the same semester. Just remember to be transparent in your communication to students and parents.

Adviser as Pied Piper

Schools are filled with kids who need some place to belong, a school home. Yearbook attracts a cross-section of students. They fuss and fight, but eventually bond. They push one another to be better.

They get it, eventually, if you speak to them like young adults.

And, to repeat for clarity, they fuss and fight. Your relationship with yearbook staffers will be different. Maintain control, but build the environment for them you wish you'd had in high school. Give them opportunities to earn your trust, and empower them a little more. And, a little more. And, a little more. Soon enough you'll be attracting the top students, having fun amid the chaos of yearbook and having more impact on a group of kids — and your community — than you ever believed.