



MIND THE GUTTER PODCAST PROJECT LIST

EPISODE 29 // LIVING THE LIFE // ROBIN CHRISTOPHER

1. Set staff goals.

It's all about prioritizing and preparation. Christopher suggests setting a reasonable number (no more than five to seven) of specific goals and building plans right away. Think about aspects of your book, your workspace or your staff process that you'd like to change and list five goals for next year's staff.

Remember that the best goals are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-based), so — rather than “We want better captions” — your goal might read, “After training in the fundamentals of great caption writing, the staff will commit to writing two-sentence captions for all candid and action images, beginning with the first deadline. Accompanying quotes will add to the coverage value of each caption and independent lead-ins will create visual/verbal links to the images they describe.”

Then, choose one of the goals you'd propose and detail the plan to ensure success in meeting that goal. Collect or create training materials to equip the staff with the information they need to achieve success.

2. Analyze a spread.

Choose one of your spreads from an early deadline, a spread from your 2019 or 2020 yearbook or a spread from the online showcase at yearbookdiscoveries.com and provide compliments, constructive criticism and suggestions for improvements or changes. Use a screen shot or PDF to provide visuals alongside your thoughts. Your comments should include — but not be limited to — photo packaging, photo selection, typography, headline writing, story telling, use of white space, use of color and graphics and scale.

NOTE: Another way to approach this assignment is selecting a spread you have access to, saving it out as a practice spread and creating a “before” PDF before making the changes to improve the spread (still as a practice spread) and ultimately exporting your final version and packaging your “before” and “after” PDFs alongside the commentary.

3. Emphasize hierarchy.

Select a spread from your book that doesn't have great hierarchy. Save it out as a practice spread and create a “before” PDF before making the changes to improve the spread (still as a practice spread) and ultimately exporting your final version and packaging your “before” and “after” PDFs alongside the commentary of all the changes you made to ensure that photo packaging, photo content and copy packages created hierarchy in both the visual and verbal components on the spread.

It could also be interesting to have everyone re-imagine the same spread so that it's clear which kinds of changes have the most impact. You could have the staffers share their “after” files so they could be projected one after another during an online discussion session.