



Paul Keers
Editorial director

In 1994, I set up Axon Publishing together with managing director Ellen Brush, bringing key editorial and publishing skills together at the top of an independent company.

Our continued partnership has meant Axon has always presented both creativity and publishing acumen as equal elements in its service provision.

I draw on experience as a journalist and editor on magazines and newspapers like *Cosmopolitan*, the *Daily Mail* and the *Telegraph Magazine*, and as launch editor of *GQ* in the UK, to bring that creativity to bear.

Our clients have ranged from Marks & Spencer, Procter & Gamble, Guinness and Conran to universities, charities and membership organisations. In the International Customer Publishing Awards 2009, meanwhile, Axon won Catalogue of the Year for its work for *M&S Home*, underlining the diversity of our work.



Axon Publishing's clients include Marks & Spencer and NCT
To find out more about Axon Publishing, visit www.axonpublish.com

Beyond the brochure – editorialising the brand

Creating the right editorial environment to deliver brand messages is a sure-fire way of engaging audiences, writes *Paul Keers*

Editorial is an inherently cross-platform concept. From the communication environment, through the creation of stories and visuals, to the commissioning of bylined creatives and the skilled use of language, the basic tenets of editorial function across digital and print, in order to engage with a brand's audience. In contemporary media, achieving that engagement is key to success. The old-fashioned 'brochure' approach is no longer enough.

A traditional brochure essentially presents a brand's products, in the voice of their manufacturer. It is no coincidence that the phrase 'brochureware' is now used to describe websites that pursue a similar approach.

If you want customers to download an app, read a magazine, spend time with a catalogue or on a website, then you have to go beyond that brochure-style presentation.

Editorialising a brand, whatever the platform, means employing the interpretative and creative skills of editors and their teams to merge that brand into the needs, desires and lifestyle of an audience. It means creating an editorial environment, then populating it with editorial content.

There are many ways to build an editorial environment for a client message. Should the communication be titled and web addressed with a name distinct from the brand itself? Should it carry third-party ads, which reinforce the brand positioning? Are there editorial contributors whose bylines will be acknowledged by the audience?

Even before an editor comes up with stories, a communication can move beyond the brochure and begin to employ editorial characteristics.

The role that an editor then performs for an agency is almost

the opposite of what they might do for a mainstream publisher. Generally, editors have a reader's lifestyle in mind, into which they slot particular products and services; an agency editor starts with the client's products or services, and then constructs a lifestyle around them.

There may, for example, have been no reason for a firm of housebuilders to consider which TV chef their typical customers might follow, but that's how an editor could begin to plan a food feature, in order to illustrate the life a customer might aspire to lead within their new kitchen and dining room.

An editor is always asking 'What does this client want to say?' – and

by saying excitedly that it featured 'cleverly inserted detailing, badging and placement prints'. Now, that might mean something to a buyer in the business, but it means zero to a potential customer. A publishing agency can interpret that trade-speak and translate it into the language of the audience.

One client's customers have 'children'; another's will have 'kids'. Right down to that kind of detail, an agency's editorial team will ensure that the language and tone of voice is appropriate for a brand.

No one is more particular about the accuracy of content than a corporate client. In the broader publishing world, sub-editing is becoming a

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then finding a way to express that message so that it will engage its customers.

A client once said to us that its message was simple – 'It's cheaper'. Editorialising that message meant thinking 'It's cheaper than...'; 'It's cheaper, but it's not...'; 'It's cheaper for a family like...'. Those three story outlines alone could bring that message to life.

Part of the job is putting the message into the language of the audience, whether that is the language of a redtop, a broadsheet or a glamorous monthly. Again, that's true whether online or in print.

One retailer described its new menswear to its customers in its e-zine

forgotten art; how many newspapers now expect journalists to sub their own copy? In customer publishing, stringent standards of accuracy apply, corporate clients demand accuracy, and sub-editors are valued members of an agency's editorial team.

Intriguing, exciting, revealing, entertaining. Practical and helpful. Desirable and aspirational. These are some of the ways audiences describe successful editorial in research.

These are the reasons why editorial engages an audience, why people download an app, access a website or sit down with a magazine. And these are the attributes that a brand can achieve by leveraging editorial for itself. ■