Time is on Your Side

A TRIED AND TRUE SYSTEM FOR MANAGING DEADLINES

The word “deadline” strikes fear in many people, but not half as much as to yearbook advisers. Meeting each and every deadline in hopes of getting your book back on time enhances that fear. Let me relieve some of the tension that builds up when you look at all those deadlines when you start your year.

I have found deadlines to be akin to the following: getting to class on time, turning assignments in on time or starting the research paper that is due tomorrow. They all have something in common—time. Most students don’t see the urgency of doing anything until the last possible minute. Advisers often fall back on threats, which do work sometimes, but I have devised a system called GPNE to motivate my staff to make deadlines.

**Grades Motivate**

The first and the most logical motivation would be grades. If you have a yearbook class, design the curriculum to accumulate points. My point ranges are equivalent to an A, B, or C.

- A “C” is average work. Everyone in yearbook is expected to perform to this level or they are out of yearbook. All deadlines are met.
- A “B” reflects above average work with a creative flair. All deadlines are met.
- An “A” is beyond expectations, with, of course, all deadlines met.

The common ground is that all deadlines must be met to get any points and to remain in the class. If you do not have yearbook as a class and it is an afternoon activity, points still work. The reward gets a little different and in some ways, better. Points can accumulate to earn pizza parties, luncheons, dinners, pool parties—all kinds of fun things, to stimulate meeting those deadlines.

**Avoid the Evils of Procrastination**

The second battle is the “Procrastination” evil. Procrastination runs rampant in junior and senior high schools and in yearbook staffs. To attack this evil, prepare short-range goals before the real deadline. I have always given myself a ten day buffer between the real and the unreal deadline. It works! Pizza parties work here also, along with some time off for meeting the goal. Use a buddy system in which staffers check on each other by text, phone, e-mail. Reminders by these methods are great since students are attached to these technologies.

**Remember No Event Happens Again**

The third technique is the “No Event Again” guilt trip. Homecoming events, the dance, coronation, that great play at the game, the crowd—all these events happen once, never to be repeated again. The staff must capture the moment. They are part of that history. If they don’t do it, it does not get done. You should put your best staffers on these beats. They will get it done and bring the less diligent with them.

If all else fails, threats become a necessary evil. Threats will only work if your staffers see the benefits or consequences as relevant to them. If not meeting deadlines means that a pizza party won’t be held, editors will work with staffers to get them done. Threaten only if you plan to follow through.
FOLLOW THE GPNE SYSTEM TO MEET YOUR YEARBOOK DEADLINES.

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Marvin Douglas has been the yearbook adviser at Park Center Senior High School for seven years. He is also the National Honor Society adviser, Girls tennis coach, and Boys and Girls track (hurdles) coach. Marvin has been teaching for 32 years.