For most, being named editor is the culmination of several years of preparation and the fulfillment of a longstanding goal. It is only once named, though, that an individual begins to understand all that the title "editor" encompasses. The position carries both prestige and responsibility and requires the holder to be more than just a talented journalist. While a completed yearbook is the most visible gauge of an editor's accomplishments, many other factors help to determine the level of success found throughout the year.

The excitement exhibited in the office during the first couple weeks of school, if it can be maintained, can help insure success throughout the year. Having served as editor of the 1987 ORIENT I know the many hardships often encountered by an editor. If I had an opportunity to implement the 20-20 vision I have in hindsight, there are 10 basic areas I would focus my attention on to insure a successful year. These suggestions can be implemented by any editor to help create a positive and productive working environment.

1. **Create a staff manual.** A personalized staff manual is a valuable asset for any staff and should serve as a style book for the publication. The manual should include the purpose of the publication, job descriptions for each staff position, a deadline schedule and a reference section as a bare minimum.

   The section on job descriptions should be very extensive and well thought through—the time spent in creating this section will prove
worthwhile when staff members begin to argue over responsibilities. The reference section should answer questions unique to your campus by serving as a personalized style guide. This section should explain how you will refer to buildings on campus, athletic teams, fraternity’s, sorority’s, etc. The manual should also include guidelines for the actual production of the book such as what information is required in a caption, what must be included in a headline, etc.

A staff manual can be a valuable tool if time and care are spent in its preparation and it is used. Too many times staff members merely stuff style manuals away in their desk and don’t bother to look at them. If a staff member asks a question which is answered in the staff manual, request that they use the manual to find the information they need.

2. Establish an editorial board. If you do not already have one, an editorial board is a must. This board, which is generally made up of the editor, associate editor, photo editor, business manager and section editors, is responsible for making editorial decisions concerning the contents of the yearbook. The responsibilities of this board, and the decisions it will make, should be detailed in the staff manual.

The editorial board also has the responsibility of evaluating the editor. If this is done on a monthly basis it will enable the editor to understand the staff’s expectations and give him time to incorporate the suggestions into his actions and work habits. This is one way to help alleviate the possibility of dissention among staff members. The staff should use the editorial board as a place to voice their grievances.
3. Develop relations with important people. The yearbook, it seems, is often overlooked when school officials send out press releases or assign press passes to university sponsored events. Taking time to write a letter to administrators explaining the purpose of the yearbook, and requesting that you are given the same considerations as the campus newspaper, will enable you to do a better job reporting campus news and events. These relationships will also make officials more apt to talk with you when matters of importance arise and you want their opinion for a story.

4. Spend time in areas where you have little experience. If you do not understand the paperwork and other details your business manager is taking care of, take time to learn. Or perhaps you have very little knowledge of what makes a good photograph. Your photo editor will have greater respect for you if you express an interest in learning about his area and he will feel better about the fact that you are selecting some of the photographs for the yearbook. This does not imply that you need to be an expert in each area concerning the production of the yearbook. If that were the case there would be no reason to recruit specialists for the staff.

There are three reasons, however, that make it essential that you learn as much as you can about each position on your staff. First, you are the one who has to make the final decision if a problem should arise. Second, it enables your staff not to be dependent on any given person.
Finally, it enhances your personal abilities and further educates you for a professional job.

5. **Develop strong relations with your adviser.** Clearly the most important resource you will have is your adviser. He has worked with editors before and understands what you are going through. If an adviser offers an alternative to something you have suggested, it is probably because from his experience he knows a better way. His advice, you will soon find, can save many headaches. Furthermore, appreciate his desire to help. While an editor is only there for one year, part of an adviser's career is advising the yearbook and he will be the one who is forced to take the heat for mistakes which are made.

6. **Establish that the yearbook is a business.** Just like any other department of your school, the yearbook is a business. To help create this attitude, the editor should maintain specific weekly business hours. Such a schedule will enable the staff to plan to be in the office when the editor is there if they have questions. This also allows them to tell others when you can be reached in the office.

While the yearbook office often has a relaxed atmosphere, it is important that it doesn't become just a place for people to hang out between classes. If this seems to be a problem, put them to work while they are in the office. This will either keep them from stopping by or they will become a regular member of your staff. Either way you have maintained that the yearbook office is a place for business.
7. **Set a strong example.** This is one of the most important areas to follow if you hope to produce a yearbook consistent with the capabilities of the staff. Staff members, especially those who are working for the publication for the first time, will follow the example set by the editor. If they see someone who seems unconcerned about meeting deadlines they will become slack in their own. It cannot be expected that staff members will work harder than the example set by the editor.

A great deal of an editor's work will go unnoticed because it has not direct tie to the actual production of the book. Therefore, it is essential that the editor continue to establish himself as a worker in the production areas of the book so that the staff is able to see results from the time the he is in the office.

Setting a strong example also deals with how you deal with others who have missed their deadlines. It is important that once deadlines are established they are adhered to. Any variance from this procedure will lead staff members to feel they can always get an extension. It is equally important that once you have established what will happen when a student misses a deadline that you stick to it.

The first seven suggestions all have direct relations to the production of the yearbook, the final three are proposed to help an editor keep his sanity. These practices will be easily followed during the first several weeks of the year--and then they will be easily pushed aside. If you want to stay excited about the time you spend in the office, the following suggestions should be maintained throughout the year.
8. Set aside time outside of the office to do your school work. While it may not always seem this way, the primary reason you are at school is to earn a degree. Try and set aside study time each day to spend at home or in the library. This will enable you to study when you need to study and work when you need to work--it is very difficult to mix the two. It can be very frustrating attempting to study for an exam in the office when the phone keeps ringing and people need "just a minute of your time." In order to maintain a good grade-point average it is necessary to set aside time each day for studying outside of the office.

9. Close the office one night a week--even when you are on deadline! By Christmas break editors are often beginning to feel "burnout." This night off will give you a chance to go to the movies or visit friends without feeling guilty about being gone from the office when your staff is there. Both you and your staff will need an evening each week when no one is expected to do anything for the yearbook. This insures members of the staff that they can make plans for that evening and not have to worry about you asking them to come in for a work session.

10. Continue to work in those areas of the book that you enjoy. Throughout the year you will often be confronted with tasks which seem menial and in no way call upon the journalistic talents which led you to the position of editor. In order to avoid becoming frustrated, take time to continue to do those things which you enjoy as a journalist. If you were a sports writer before you became editor and you enjoyed it--take time out to write a sports story you can have fun with.
As you begin your tenure as editor remember that you are a full-time student expected to work like a full-time professional. The time you spend now preparing for the yearbook will pay off rich dividends throughout the year. The above suggestions should help insure that the excitement you feel now about being named editor will last throughout the year.