

Mini-profile:

a day in the life of a publishing director



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My working day begins any time between 7.30am and 8.30am, depending partly on when my first meeting starts (and since we have offices in the US, Europe and Asia, early meetings are fairly common). My current position spans circulation management (including subscriptions management, membership management, and circulation analysis), journals marketing and library marketing. Depending on which of those hats I'm wearing, I might be meeting with the executive director of a major society to discuss ways of boosting their membership numbers, looking at circulation growth for a group of our journals over the last five years, or brainstorming how to launch a new sales initiative to libraries.

One of the things I most enjoy about my job is that it brings me into contact with people across almost all departments, divisions and offices within Blackwell – which means that most days at least half my time is spent in meetings: in person, by phone, or via video-conference. I meet weekly with

all my direct reports and monthly with my whole team (18 of us and counting), and am also in regular communication (e-mail, face-to-face, phone, or video-conference) with numerous other colleagues worldwide. I'm lucky in that I work with a wonderful group of people and, whether I see them every day or only once a year, I can completely count on them for help, advice and inspiration.

Depending on the day, I could also, for example, be at a meeting of our Sales Policy Group to discuss issues such as pricing plans for 2007, open access developments or new sales initiatives; at the marathon monthly four-hour-long meeting of our Science & Academic Executive Committee, which covers everything from current hot topics in science to a review of how our digitization program is going; or at a meeting of one of our many working parties – on anything from developing and implementing best practices for marketing to individuals, to how we can make our sales reporting more helpful for internal and external clients.

Like most people, I also spend a lot of time writing and answering e-mails, although so far I have resisted the lure of the BlackBerry (except when I am traveling) – partly because I am so bad at typing with my thumbs and partly because I hate the idea of having to be on call 24/7!

Once I have deleted all the spam from my inbox (no, I really don't need cheap Canadian drugs, a loan from a disreputable company, or pictures of the lovely Sandy, thank you very much!), I tackle the easy e-mails first – pricing enquiries, which can be forwarded to our customer service team, quick answers to questions about a journal that we have just taken over, meeting requests, etc. Then, with a strong cup of lemon and ginger tea to fortify me (I still can't do the American coffee thing even after nearly six years), it's on to the tougher e-mails. These might include questions from librarians about our pricing policy, a request for a circulation forecast for a title we hope to publish, budgets to review, or a client question about online access for their members.

Most weeks I have at least one client meeting, either with staff from one of the journals we already publish or with representatives from a journal that we hope to publish in future. These meetings range from the very formal – PowerPoint presentation, smart dress, lots of senior staff, to the downright informal – drinks with an editor in the local pub while being bombarded with all sorts of unrelated questions, so I have to be prepared for anything.

In between meetings and e-mail it can be a challenge to find the time to get on with any 'real' work – ideas for how to better structure the department to meet the company's future needs, a think-piece on how we can get smarter at managing our subscriptions, suggestions for new ways to analyze our customer base that will help the sales and marketing teams ensure that our journals are well penetrated in the market, ways to improve our membership services to help keep existing societies happy and attract new societies to publish with us, and plans to extend the scope of our library marketing. I try to work from home once a week when I can, so that I can really focus on these bigger issues – it's amazing how productive you can be when there are no distractions!

Last, but not least, there's reading – lots of it – which I usually print out and read on the train on the way to and from work. This helps me to stay

abreast of the latest trends in scholarly publishing as well as in the library community. A selection from my current batch includes the latest issue of *Against the Grain*, minutes from various meetings, a report from our bibliometrics analyst on impact factors, and two hefty bids to review. Much of this is just for information but some of it, like the bids, also requires feedback from me – usually by yesterday ...

I'm very lucky in that my job enables me to work directly with our customers (librarians, society members and others) and with our clients (journal editors, society officers, etc.) – both in person (at conferences, presentations and meetings) and by phone or e-mail. This really helps me to represent the differing needs of both communities – so I can explain to a journal editor why it's important to librarians that his journal publishes on time, for example, or talk to a librarian about the financial pressures facing many societies.



With Emily Gillingham, our Library Marketing & Communications Manager, who is based in Blackwell's UK office

I'm also lucky in that I get to travel quite a bit, which I always enjoy, whether I'm flying back to the UK to see colleagues in Oxford (which is a treat for me as I can also visit friends and family) or within the USA to attend a library conference or client presentation.

But it's always even nicer to be back at home with my family – husband Pete and children Grace (17), Jack (14) and Joe (12), plus Tom (19) when he is home from university in Toronto. It's Wednesday so it must be my turn to cook, which means – sorry guys! – it's pasta again ...