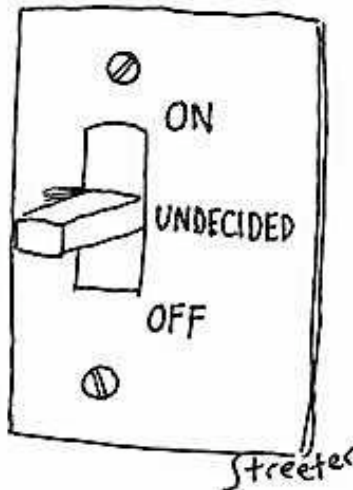


MAKING THE SWITCH

Implementing a New Publishing System and Revamping Workflow



The Project

National Geographic magazine wanted to update its publishing system and revamp its workflow

The Goal

Find a cutting-edge publishing system that would enable 120 staffers to switch from a paper-based workflow to a streamlined, efficient digital production process

Results

- Streamlined production process from 16 weeks to 8-12 weeks
- Switched to PDF-based workflow, eliminating all but one paper proof distribution
- Seamless print-to-Web XML export

David Brindley
Copydesk Director, *National Geographic*
dbrindle@ngs.org

Ten Tips for a Successful Implementation

1. **Define Goals** Be specific about what you want to achieve with the new publishing system.
2. **Gather Information** Ask colleagues for ideas and get information from other publications that have gone through similar changes.
3. **Get Top-down Support** Don't just delegate to junior staff. Make sure senior management are onboard and active in pushing through changes and achieving results.
4. **Make a Plan** Have a plan for the project in place and follow it. Keep everyone on the same schedule. (Make sure you have a schedule!)
5. **Be Flexible** Have a plan, but be flexible to change as project progresses and input from colleagues comes in.
6. **Test the System** Put it through its paces before going live.
7. **Co-opt Colleagues** Success will stem from colleagues embracing the new system. Meet with colleagues to discuss concerns and to sell the benefits of the new system. Choose one person in each department to act as liaison and the go-to person for help and advice. Offer weekly "clinics" to work through difficulties. Send emails highlighting helpful tools and tips.
8. **Offer Training** Be sure colleagues are instructed in how to use the system. (We did this in two four-hour sessions for each department.)
9. **Give It Time** Allow for some bumps, but know that if you did the job correctly within three months people will likely wonder how they ever worked in the old system.
10. **Think Big** What new tools or procedures will make a significant positive impact on how you do your work?