How to Work Up the Editorial Ladder

If you want to work your way up the editorial ladder, it’s going to take some time and some work, and, no doubt, you’ll get involved in various editorial positions along the way. Although everyone’s success story is a bit different, there are some specific things that you can do to work your way up to the editorial job that you really want. Read on to find out more about working up the editorial ladder.

Start Out in College with Quality Publications

If you know before entering college that you want to be a journalist, and later an editor at a top magazine, it’s important that you start out in the right college. When you are looking for the right college, you’ll want to focus on colleges that are well known for producing quality publications. Remember, a big part of getting internships and, later, journalism and editorial positions is going to be your experience and portfolio. Working with top quality publications at the college level can be great experience and can help you to start building your portfolio before you even graduate.

Apply for Internships

As you go through college, you’ll want to apply for internships. Some are paid and others are for college credit only. However, these internships can help you build up the experience section of your resume, even while you are still in college. If you are aiming for those high ranking editorial positions in the future, then college is the time to get started with internships that will allow you to build towards the future. It is important to note that these internship positions are competitive. You’ll need great grades, some good clips, and a passion for the work if you really want to succeed.

Achieving Copy Editor

The next step on the ladder to the coveted top editorial positions is achieving a job as a copy editor. Although copy editors today are definitely in high demand throughout various avenues of publishing, you’ll find that the competition is still tough. In order to climb the ladder and land this type of a job, you’ll need a winning resume and cover letter, as well as some great clips to show in your portfolio. Acing the interview is important as well, and you may even be required to take a copy editing test. This type of job can include working long hours for pay that is less than wonderful. So, remember that this is an entry-level position and focus on using it to advance your career in order to find other editorial positions.

Moving on to Assistant Editor and Editor

Once you get a foot in the door with a copy editing position, you’ll want to move on to jobs such as assistant editor or editor. In order to do this, you’ll need to make sure that you are well aware of AP guidelines and that you excel in your current job. Meeting journalists is also a great way to move up, since you’ll be able to ask for some recommendations. Make sure that when you apply for these jobs, you include two or more clips that have been published and that show your command of language and AP style.

Managing Editor and Above

Going on to achieve managing editor jobs and jobs above that is going to be extremely competitive for you. You’ll need to have excellent recommendations from previous jobs, a portfolio of killer clips, and the ability to hire and manage others below you.

Tips on Climbing the Ladder

As you climb the editorial ladder to top editorial positions, there are some specific tips you’ll need to employ.

• Tip #1 — Define Your Goals — It’s important that you define your goals in this field. What job do you want to have in the future? Until you are able to define where you want to go, you’ll not be able to decide on how you can get there.

• Tip #2 — Communicate Those Goals — Once you have set goals in your editorial career, you’ll want to communicate those goals with management.
Tip #3 — Stay Current in the Field — Ensure that you stay current in the editorial field. If you don’t, you won’t be able to take the next step up the ladder to the editorial positions that you want. Be aware of things that are changing in the industry if you want to be successful.

Tip #4 — Networking — Networking is important if you want to climb the editorial ladder. This should be done both within the current organization that you work with and beyond.

Tip #5 — Perform Well — Performance now is imperative. You cannot expect to get higher ranking editorial positions if you are not currently excelling in the position that you hold. If you want to climb the ladder, then exceptional performance is mandatory.

Skills and Qualities You Need to Succeed

When you are working to move up the editorial ladder and you’re aiming for top editorial positions, you’ll need to have particular skills and qualities. Here are several top qualities that employers look for when they are hiring.

• Curiosity — One of the most important qualities you’ll need to make it up the ladder in the editorial realm is curiosity. Showing curiosity towards the entire world is something that employers are going to look for.

• Self-Confidence — Of course, self-confidence is also needed if you are going to successfully climb the editorial ladder. A sense of self is imperative.

• Empathy with Readers — Empathy with your readers is another important quality. Great editors should be able to create a bond with readers and understand what readers will find important and interesting.

• Stamina — Stamina is another must. This is not a profession for the faint of heart. The job can be grinding at times, so you’ll need both intellectual and physical stamina.

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