PRODUCTION DIRECTORS STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING - Minutes
The Publishers Association, 29b Montague Street, London WC1B 5BW
Thursday 15th January 2015, 10am

Present
Alaina-Marie Bassett, BIC
Mike Levaggi, HarperCollins
Fiona McIntosh, Orion Books
Heather O’Connell, BIC Consultant
Nancy Roberts, Cambridge University Press
Nick Ross, Little, Brown Publishing Group

Apologies
Russell Evans, Simon & Schuster
Helen Everson, Penguin Random House
Nigel Eyre, Informa
Alison Kennedy, Egmont UK

1. Welcome
HOC welcomed the Group to the meeting, introducing Alaina-Marie Bassett of BIC who will now attend all future meetings of this Committee in the place of Karina Luke (KL). HOC thanked the Group for their attendance and their continued support of BIC training courses throughout 2014.

HOC informed the Group that every BIC training course must now recuperate all its costs, and this must include a 20% profit, in order to run in 2015. She also noted that new courses will not be in production this year due to the start-up costs involved.

2. Review of minutes and actions from the last meeting
Production for Non-Production People
HOC informed the Group that this training course’s content will remain as it is for 2015.

An Introduction to Colour Printing
HOC noted that this training course ran once in May 2014 and is scheduled to run again in March of this year.

Distribution for Production
HOC noted that the production of this training course has now been parked until 2016.

Flight Checking Explained
HOC informed the Group that the proposed course on flight checking is being put to one side until 2016. She noted that this course may be restructured into a seminar which would run for half a day or else be added to the repro course. NR suggested that this was a good idea.

ALPSP
At the last meeting, this Group discussed giving ALPSP a discount in return for their promoting BIC training courses to their members. HOC noted that KL is in the process of speaking to ALPSP to agree the discounts and promotional co-operation.

3. Update on new courses
Digital Book Production Explained
HOC informed the Group that Digital Book Production Explained – a new course which looks at digital print – is scheduled to run for the first time on Thursday 26th February at CPI in Chippenham. The group reviewed the content and felt it met their needs.

Intermediate eBook Creation
HOC mentioned a new intermediate eBook course. She noted that a venue with access to computers will be required for this course and commented that this is proving to be difficult to secure. NR and NAR suggested that attendees of this new course should bring their own computers to the course. HOC agreed this was a good idea and suggested that it should be tried out for the first running of the course.

**ACTION**: AB to agree a date with Faber Create Space and the trainer, Lindy O’Donnell, for this new course.

**ACTION**: HOC to check what software is required for the course (all free) and AMB to check that Faber Create Space has the right facilities (enough power points, internet connections, etc.)

Producing Children’s Books
HOC noted that new courses for 2015 also include the Producing Children’s Books training course. This course is scheduled to run on Tuesday 27th January 2015. HOC commented that this course may need to be cancelled due to a lack of delegates but will be rescheduled later in 2015. AB noted that there had been interest in this course from UCL’s MA Publishing students but noted that their seminars run from Tuesday to Thursday and as a result, it would be difficult for students to attend courses that are scheduled for mid-week. She suggested that, if this course is rescheduled, this could be organised for a Monday or Friday date.

**ACTION**: HOC to agree a new date for this course with Egmont and Rochelle Talary for later in 2015.

4. Timing of courses
HOC noted that the timing of the courses did not have the impact that this Group had feared it might. She noted that there had not been a decrease in attendance for summer training courses despite the fact that the courses held in factory venues cannot run during the summer period. HOC noted that October through to December had been less popular, and January is proving to be the same. She noted that appraisals generally take place in January, just as budgets are currently being drawn up too, and suggested that there may be a rise in attendance soon due to these factors.

5. Sales & marketing review
**Review of marketing and sales to date**
HOC informed the Group about the sales figures for BIC training courses in 2014. She noted that every BIC course ran in 2014 except the Understanding Paper training course which was to be hosted at Holmen’s paper mill in Sweden. She noted that this course will not be scheduled to run in 2015 due to a lack of interest in the course. NR noted his disappointment about this decision, commenting that the absence of this course will form a gap in the production courses offered by BIC. HOC commented that it has previously been suggested that this course could run in a paper museum in the UK but informed the Group that the cost of the venue had been so expensive that it was not a viable option. She suggested that another possible venue within the UK could be a colour-plan organisation in Cumbria. NR suggested that an organisation in Fish Island, London could also be a possibility, or even a paper shop. FM suggested that the course could become more of a seminar-
based course, providing paper samples rather than a tour of the paper mill. She agreed with NR that paper is an integral part of the production process and that a course should be available to the book industry. NR noted that paper has become trendy in the past few years and suggested this could facilitate a demand for this course if marketed in the right way. AB informed the Group that An Introduction to Paper and Colour Printing – a course which runs in Trento, Italy – includes a full day at the paper mill in Garda; so BIC is providing a paper course but not as an individual course. She noted that this course ran twice in 2014. FM commented that the attendees of this sort of course tend to be junior members of staff and may be put off by the prospect of going abroad alone. She also noted that organisations are not keen to spend a large sum of money on a junior member of staff in case that member leaves the organisation after being trained. NR questioned whether there was a possibility that attendees who only want to experience the paper mill could attend the course in Trento for one day. HOC noted that there would be issues with the transfer to Lake Garda from the airport and noted that it would not be financially viable too.

**ACTION:** HOC to discuss the possibility of Cumbria’s colour-plan company hosting the Understanding Paper course in 2015 with KL.

**Review of feedback stats**

HOC informed the Group that an analysis of the feedback forms for the BIC training courses held in 2014 resulted in some impressive statistics. She circulated a print-out of the statistics to the Group during the meeting. She commented that course materials are now provided, even if some attendees choose not to keep them. The Group agreed that these are very impressive statistics and commented that they have gained anecdotal feedback from their colleagues which tell a similar tale of satisfaction. FM noted that her colleagues’ Certificates of Achievement have now been received. HOC commented that this will be a faster process in the future now that AB has admin support.

NR suggested that BIC should advertise their training courses in The Bookseller. HOC noted that this is expensive. AB informed the Group that the courses are currently advertised in the PA’s monthly PR email, are posted on NAG’s website and advertised on Creative Skillset’s website too. HOC suggested that the Alliance of Independent Authors (ALLI) might also be a good organisation to contact about courses.

**ACTION:** AB to contact ALLI to see if BIC courses might be advertised to their members.

HOC noted that a Press Release will shortly be launched regarding the feedback from 2014 courses. She also noted that a few organisations have contacted BIC to ask whether they can sponsor a training course; which is not permitted. However, sponsorship of bursaries is available.

**Bursaries**

HOC noted that there has been an increase in interest for these bursaries. She also noted that Creative Skillset’s bursaries can now be used on BIC training courses.

HOC informed the Group that a Context Day was run by BIC for the UCL MA Publishing students on 1st October 2014. She noted that this event was a success and has led to BIC developing a full-term course for UCL for the second term of the MA Publishing course. She noted that this course will cover material from manuscripts through to the consumer. In return, UCL will work with BIC in looking to award MA/BA credits for BIC courses, where possible.
6. **Course venues**

HOC informed the Group that there has been an issue with the current venue for BIC’s seminar-based courses. She noted that the two-month cancellation policy at their current venue is severely restricting the likelihood that courses will go ahead. She noted that an alternative venue is being sought out but noted that many seminar-based courses have been cancelled this month due to this fact. AB noted that this issue has now been resolved. She noted that future classroom-based courses will take place at the recently refurbished Faber Creative Spaces and all cancelled courses will be rescheduled to take place here later in the year.

HOC noted that the possibility of in-house training had been discussed at the previous meeting and noted that this has now been raised with a number of organisations outside of London. She noted that Glasgow and Oxford have great potential for future BIC courses but are dependent on demand and venues. She noted that there could be an issue reaching enough people to sign up for these events. NAR noted that she will look into this and encourage involvement where possible.

7. **A.O.B.**

NAR questioned what the most popular BIC training courses of 2014 had been. HOC listed eBook Creation, An Introduction to Paper and Colour Printing, Shipping Explained, and An Introduction to Mono Book Production as the current favourites; since most of these courses ran twice if not three times during 2014.

HOC informed the Group that UCL are currently looking for work placements for their students. She noted that these are unpaid from UCL’s perspective and would need to be offered from March to April. FM commented that this is beneficial for both the student and the organisation offering the work placement since – if he/she is offered a job after the placement – the student has already had an introduction to the organisation which works to the advantage of the organisation too. HOC noted that any interested parties should get in touch with her regarding this matter.

HOC ended the meeting by thanking the Group for their support during 2014, and noted that she hopes 2015 will continue to build on the work already accomplished by this Group.

8. **Date of the next meeting**

Wednesday 26th August 2015.