

BREAK THROUGH TO THE OTHER SIDE: PLANNING, MARKETING, NETWORKING

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Editor JIVAN Bombay, India

Know the limits of your operation

Church organisations lack professional marketing skills

Much more can be done to network among ourselves

Church workers shouldn't be underpaid...

I do not believe that complete financial self-reliance is possible in **every** area of communication work; nor, would I add, is it necessary. Teaching for example. In the communication institute in which I worked, some courses would always need to be subsidised; others, no matter how heavy the tuition, were always filled. The first were courses relating to development or pastoral and educational work; the second were courses related to making money: advertising and computers.

So within the teaching system, strong courses helped subsidize weaker ones. Still, there was always need for larger funds - donations, seed money from corporations, gifts of equipment, and sound/video studios which took on 'outside jobs'.

Planning

The important thing is **planning**. It's important to know the limits of your operation (be this a teaching school, a magazine or a production unit). Salaries and maintenance were the largest consumers of our finances; we made sure that we covered them with our income from tuition fees (often running parallel short-term specialised courses to supplement income), but looked elsewhere to raise money for 'development' (i.e. to upgrade our facilities, e.g. studio equipment, libraries, etc.).

Marketing

The weak area of most Church organisations is **marketing**. Perhaps because we feel we have the truth, the 'Good News', whatever, we don't need to get out and advertise. Perhaps we're just too shy and unskilled. Whatever the reason, Church organisations lack professional marketing skills. Much more attention needs to be paid to this. Often our product is good, but no one knows about it.

Even as I write this, I'm aware that certain kinds of media messages (in development for example) lack the glamour and sensation of the commercial media, and cannot be 'sold' in the same way. We can't appeal to the baser human motivations like envy, seduction or violence. This sometimes constitutes a limit on the saleability of what is produced.

Networking

Again, I feel much more can be done to **network among ourselves**, advertise each other's products, establish links for production and sales and joint collaboration. Again, this is an area which hasn't been tapped, and where many just lack the imagination.

Paying professional salaries has always been an uncomfortable area for many. Of course, the term 'professional' itself is misleading. A professional in Europe draws much more than his counterpart in India; and a professional college teacher may be more honoured in society, but draws less than a young professional photographer.

I don't think that Church workers should be underpaid. This means that often you attract only less than competent workers, and the whole production suffers.

On the other hand, the 'capitalisation of labour' has meant that salaries are never enough, and talent flies towards the highest level. Obviously Church institutions can't compete with that.

Again, the answer is in planning the salary scale with a competent cost accountant, and giving one's staff other perquisites in lieu of salary. Still another alternative is to engage retired persons from the profession, who may work with you for a fraction of what you would otherwise have to pay. And you have their expertise to draw upon as well.

Other perquisites in lieu of salary

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Padre Myron J. Pereira SJ actualmente está el editor de la revista "JIVAN" (Vida) de los Jesuitas de India del Sur, publicada en Bombay. Por varios años estaba miembro del equipo administrativo del Instituto de Comunicaciones Xavier, Bombay, además responsable por sus producciones audiovisuales y sus publicaciones sobre temas de desarrollo (mujeres y salud, organización municipal etc.). El autor subraya el hecho de que algunas actividades de comunicación nunca podrían ni tendrían que lograr auto-financiamiento, como por ejemplo la área de capacitación. En todo caso es importante realizar una planificación y calculación esmerada antes de poner en práctica un proyecto. Otro punto clave parece la falta de capacidades administrativas en las organizaciones de la Iglesia. Además a vencer esta deficiencia sería necesario fomentar la colaboración y coordinación de actividades entre las iniciativas eclesiales. Finalmente P. Pereira expone la necesidad de pagar salarios competitivos: en otro caso con frecuencia solamente gente poco capacitada se queda con la institución, lo que resulta finalmente en productos de menor calidad. En lugar de pagar salarios altos propone ofrecer bonificaciones o emplear jubilados, de esta manera aprovechando sus experiencias profesionales.

RESUMEN

Myron J. Pereira est l'éditeur du magazine "Jivan" des Jésuites du Sud de l'Inde, publié à Bombay. Il est également membre de l'équipe dirigeante de l'Institut de Communication Xavier à Bombay qui produit des documents audiovisuels et des publications sur le développement. Dans l'article ci-dessus, il insiste sur la difficulté d'atteindre l'auto-financement dans le domaine de l'éducation, de l'enseignement et de la formation. Il est convaincu que ce secteur reste largement dépendant des subsides et de l'aide des donateurs. Il décrit également le manque de compétences professionnelles de marketing dans les organisations d'Eglises. De plus, il exprime le besoin de structures de collaboration plus fortes entre les initiatives lancées par les Eglises. Enfin, il constate la nécessité d'offrir aux personnes travaillant pour les structures d'Eglises un salaire suffisant au regard des barèmes nationaux, sinon on risque de ne dépendre que d'un personnel sous-payé et moins qualifié, ce qui rejaillira sur la qualité des productions.

RESUME

