

# MagsBC - Magazine Characteristics and Best Practices

For discussion – last revised Oct. 20/20

## Background

As content providers become ever more varied, we felt it would be important to have a working document to guide the Board in deciding whether a publication applying for membership is actually a magazine.

## Characteristics That Define a Magazine (whether online, in print, or both)

1. A distinct brand (e.g. if published by an organization, the magazine and its content are identifiably distinct from that organization)
2. A masthead, with:
  - a. Publisher (company)
  - b. Publisher (person)
  - c. Editor (if not same as publisher)
  - d. Any other staff
  - e. Major contributors/contractors
  - f. Link to privacy policy
  - g. Publication schedule, e.g. “published quarterly in January, April, September and December” unless obvious publish at least daily, e.g. an online newsmagazine
  - h. Circulation auditor (if applicable)
  - i. Magazine or company contact information (see below)
3. A contact page with at least 2 of the following:
  - a. An email address (a form is not sufficient)
  - b. A postal or street address
  - c. A phone numberFor those magazines which have security concerns, e.g. newsmagazines, an email address is enough.  
Plus:
  - d. City and province
4. An ad-to-editorial ratio of no more than 70:30 through any medium
5. The primary function of the publication not sales or promotion, a personal or corporate blog or podcast, a newspaper, a house organ, a zine, a travel or entertainment website or similar
6. Original work a substantial part of the magazine’s content, i.e. not aggregators
7. All content published with their original publication or creation dates, whichever is more useful (e.g. for articles, their publication date; for photographs, their creation date)
8. An advertising/media kit available via the magazine’s website or on request, if sells ads
9. Attribution to all contributors and creators, except in those cases when attribution is not normally assigned, e.g. editorials

## In addition:

### Print magazines

1. A set distribution network, e.g. maintains an up-to-date list of drop points or subscriptions
2. A set publication calendar

## Online magazines

1. Either:
  - a. A set publication calendar for magazines that publish online editions or issues, or
  - b. Articles, podcasts, videos, photos and other original content published at least once a month, or
  - c. Both
2. Self-identifies as a magazine rather than a blog, zine, podcast, newspaper, house organ, travel or entertainment website or similar

## Best Practices for Magazine Publishers

In addition to the above, a publisher:

1. Abides by the Code of Reader & Advertiser Engagement: <https://magazinescanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Code-of-Reader-Advertiser-Engagement.pdf>
2. Provides meaningful compensation for creative content (e.g. not just a free subscription)
3. Uses interns for assistance and to mentor, not to replace staff positions for ongoing or cyclical work
4. Does their best to minimize and correct grammatical, spelling, factual and attribution errors and omissions
5. Provides a pleasurable experience for viewers and/or readers through well-designed pages, curated visuals, quality audio and video, easy navigation and/or content organization, and other factors
6. Includes contact information such as email addresses for the publisher, editor, ad salesperson and other staff members in its Masthead or Contact page
7. Creates and abides by employment, privacy, human resources, inclusivity, accessibility, accountability and anti-harassment policies, procedures and laws, and follows written procedures and takes action promptly, consistently and fairly
8. Has an up-to-date advertising/media kit available via a website link, rather than "upon request", if sells ads
9. Pays its contributors, contractors, staff members and interns in a timely fashion
10. As far as possible within its editorial mandate, maintains and encourages independent, balanced, inclusive and fair editorial content
11. For free or controlled circulation magazines, pays for a circulation audit at least once every three years
12. Has the appropriate insurance to protect its staff and contributors, including:
  - a. Errors & Omissions
  - b. Commercial Liability
  - c. Directors & Officers (if applicable)
13. Makes offering its staff medical (if individuals are still paying for Medicare in that province/territory), dental, and extended medical insurance a top priority when doing financial planning
14. Strives to make and keep its website and content as accessible as possible to readers/viewers with disabilities
15. Is never content with the status quo, always striving to do better, to keep up with changes in the industry, to offer more to its readers and viewers.