

Abstract

The following is the proposal for a magazine that increases confidence and creativity in the readers by featuring people from around the world, but not celebrities or models. It will be a small magazine that is sent out monthly to various places internationally. It will feature readers' stories, artwork, poetry, photography, etc. It may also include journalistic stories from the readers. An online component will help to make the magazine more accessible offering expansions on what the magazine offered that month, scholarships, contests, and other features.

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Fifteen: How Will You Get Your Fifteen Minutes of Fame?

Magazines are a popular reading material for men and women alike. You can see them anywhere- airports, doctors' offices, homes, online, and various other places. Most are filled with models or celebrities and ads that are supposed to represent what the general population should strive to be or have. Although the magazine industry's popularity is allegedly declining, magazines are an important aspect of society:

Taken as a blurred whole, magazines reflect the personality of our culture, in a way that books (which are limited by their one-shot status, which detaches them from their audience), newspapers and newschannels (constrained by tight deadlines) and broadcast media (whose tight word limits keep them oversimplistic) do not. (Kleiner 1)

Fifteen is a new twist on the magazine scene- one that will promote creative writing and artwork to raise the self-esteem of young men and women who want to be noticed.

Before revealing the ideas of this potentially successful magazine idea, one must understand my background. In elementary school I was known for writing stories and drawing all of the time and I can vaguely remember trying to create a very simplistic magazine. I did not get past the cover because it was dinnertime, but it was the beginning to a revelation I would discover much later on in my life. Throughout high school I was unsure of what I should do for a career. I had dabbled in artwork but was never truly interested. I enjoyed writing but did not

think I could make a career of it. I enjoyed interacting with children and sociology but when taking the classes I was still unsure if it was what I wanted to do. It was not until the last year of high school that it donned on me that I should do graphic design, specifically focusing on layout design.

I was unfamiliar with graphic design at the time, but excited when taking the high school level graphic design introduction class because it seemed to come naturally to me. Having fun with something I could make a career out of seemed like a dream come true. When taking classes in college, my love for graphic design only grew larger. By December of 2005, I had landed an internship at Jostens, a yearbook company for schools around the United States and Canada. I was responsible for the process that took place before publication. Layouts became my life. By my junior year of college I knew that yearbooks were not exactly what I wanted to do but would help me get to where I really wanted to be, magazine layout design. Unfortunately magazines are mainly created in New York and as a student, it is difficult to rent an apartment and find a job, so I decided I would try to create my own.

Fifteen has been my project in the making for a long time now. I have never seen a magazine in a grocery store or doctor's office that showcased natural looking men and women of all shapes and sizes unless it was in the "Dos and Don'ts" of many popular fashion magazines, where many were being exploited as fashion don'ts. Also as an art major, I understand that it is difficult to get work in the public eye to be recognized or noticed to catch a big break. I wanted to bring a sense of hope for all of the creative minds out there that have received no praise. The criticism and letdowns are dished out more often than positive experiences such as getting a job or receiving an award for work that has been done well. My magazine is a way out of this slump of self-esteem wrecking periodicals.

Although magazines that are seen now, seem to have been around forever, they have not always portrayed the lives of celebrities, fashion sense, sports, scantily-clad women, and upcoming technology, which seem to be the most popular to read. Newspapers and books were most popular at the beginning of publication in 1440 with the invention of the printing press. When magazines were first being published, they resembled books and newspapers. *Erbauliche Monaths-Unterredungen* is a German magazine and claimed to be the first magazine published in 1663. It was issued monthly and discussed moral and religious knowledge. Almost 70 years later, in 1731, the English published *The Gentleman's Magazine* that included collections of written work and political remarks. *General Magazine and American Magazine* are two of the first American magazines to be published ten years later in 1741. Many magazines published in the United States failed soon thereafter because not many Americans could read at the time. As more individuals were becoming more literate, the magazine industry flourished. Most magazines were used to promote new books and authors and it was not until 1923, when *TIME* was introduced that the idea of magazines was given a complete makeover.

TIME was a newsmagazine that would be issued weekly. Created by just two Yale students, Briton Haden and Henry Luce, the magazine “planted the seeds of the most important and transcendent media and communications empires in the world” (Angeletti & Oliva 16). The magazine placed the reader in the news it provided with the creators’ own interpretations. It also included sections dedicated to music, education, religion, medicine, law, science, and crime. It was the way they composed the magazine that made it so successful. This new form of magazine grabbed the attention of many readers. Many other magazines published today use the same attention grabbing techniques to get the large customer base that *TIME* did.

The popular magazines seen by young adults today are in grocery stores and deal with body image and popular trends. Long gone are the days of educational and intelligent magazines. These former types of magazines still exist but do not grab the attention of the young adult reading population, as they should. Teenagers are not interested in public issues as much as they are interested in what is popular or the lives of celebrities. Subjects that teenagers should be interested in do not seem to be published and so they look to magazines geared towards a more mature mindset to feel older. This leap from childhood to adulthood reading is causing confusion in proper behavior, self-esteem issues, and a problem for adults to understand their teenage sons and daughters. According to Jim Bilton's article, he believes that:

Publishers fear that the teen market is simply disappearing, seeping away in two different directions: on one side into the internet and on the other side into a big black hole with teenagers...wanting to leap from the juvenile to the adult...there is not a business in creating editorial products for teenagers who want to be adults. (1)

There have been studies that prove that these mature magazines that young adults read have a detrimental effect on its young readers that last until adulthood. The magazines have ads of sickly skinny models to tell you this is the way you should look. Advertisements seem to take over as content of the magazine rather than the articles with messages to buy this product to better yourself. Although these magazines claim that readers should be their own person, the pages that fill these very magazines are telling their readers to look and act as the advertisements and models portray how they should look and act. Adults and young adults alike are becoming very self-conscious about perfecting themselves, although there is no such way to perfect oneself, as the magazine instructs them to. Self-esteem issues can rise from these popular magazines and tend to be more influential than some may think:

more than half of girls and young women say they get ideas for the way they want their bodies to look from celebrities and media, and 56 percent of girls and young women believe celebrities tend to have perfect bodies. (Dove 1)

Men are also affected by the media with a bombardment of advertisements and models or celebrities who are muscular and look better than the average reader. It seems that the medias is pushing for everyone to be perfect: “It is no longer good enough to simply have a functional body” (Tiessen 1). This claim is saddening to many people who cannot and will not ever be able to achieve the exaggerated perfected look that is often perfected by digital programs such as Adobe’s Photoshop, a program used to alter photography.

These obscured images that magazines portray are hindering young men and women from being who they truly are. Self-esteem issues that derive from magazines such as these may be counteracted with more positive magazines such as an art and literary magazine. With *Fifteen*, readers will not be overwhelmed with models or celebrities filling the pages. Studies have been done in Ireland that proves art can help young and old with art therapy and art programs: “Researchers also found that the self esteem and social skills of participants in mental health arts programmes improved significantly” (McDonagh 1). The purpose of this magazine is to promote the real beauty of the human spirit. Beauty, which is often associated with exteriors although it is the mind that can behold the most beauty of all, will now be expressed through artwork and creative writing. What better way to give confidence to young adults than to give them fifteen minutes of fame?

The original quote from Andy Warhol, “In the future everyone will be world-famous for fifteen minutes” was referring to the small attention span of the general public and their fascination with a specific topic for a short period then moving to the next. My idea of fifteen

minutes of fame is to give deserving individuals a chance to shine, even if it is only by being featured in the magazine for an issue. This may seem hypocritical because in a sense, this is making the individual well known, but in the very least this new celebrity will be a positive influence. Also as with art therapy, I am hoping *Fifteen* can “provide a medium for people to communicate and express themselves in a different way and learn something about themselves” (Farooqui 2). Art therapy has existed since the 1940s and has helped many individuals young and old to express themselves and to help sort out internal problems. Although I am not a therapist myself, I feel that a magazine such as mine will provide a similar positive service at a much lower cost. With a magazine that is coming out monthly that stimulates the mind and exercises creativity and also gives the readers advice on how to become better, it seems like a perfect plan for success.

Creating a good long lasting magazine from scratch is a difficult task. The Internet and television seem to be capturing the audiences that once were reading magazines but magazines are not going anywhere, although many that start new magazines have 95% failure rate. These failed magazines are not due to television and the internet though, but rather bad planning. Believe it or not, men and women are actually more inclined to buy something from a magazine. My theory is that it is because it does not cause an interruption; if interested, the person can view and evaluate it for as long as he or she wants. Magazines just have a more appealing level of entertainment than the internet and television. Plus they are more portable and less expensive than options to have television and internet anywhere. Magazines simply have many qualities that other types of media do not have. That said, creating a therapeutic and positive art and writing magazine seems like a solution to many of teenage to college aged students issues of self-esteem and lack of a place to channel their creativity.

Although mentioned before that many new magazines have a high failure rate, if done correctly there is less than a third chance of failure. There are three main components that a magazine must execute well in order to become successful:

1. Developing an editorial product that will appeal to whatever public you are after—a unique and highly creative task;
2. Marketing that product to the public (commonly called circulation), also a unique and highly creative task;
3. Marketing the product through highly sophisticated selling methods to a small number of advertisers who want to reach the public that reads each specific magazine. (Kobak 23)

Magazines serve the purpose of entertaining the people of today, with popular trends and opinions. The idea of an art magazine seems smart, because art is always evolving and has existed since cavemen drew on walls with berries to convey stories. The life cycle of *Fifteen* should be a long one.

As a special interest consumer magazine, *Fifteen*, seems as if it could thrive off of a large group of readers. Many individuals are more creative than they are given credit for but become disheartened when given little to none of the recognition they deserve. By offering an open forum for young men and women to submit their works of art, comment on others, and possibly enter to win prizes or more recognition for their work while receiving advice, this magazine seems like a perfect opportunity for writers and artists to receive some recognition. *Fifteen* will focus on artwork of all kinds- lyrics, photography, traditional art, poetry, digital art, short stories, and fashion. Anything that can become a canvas and has been used in an artistic way is welcomed and will be showcased in the magazine. Any person featured will be no different than

any other except for he or she have no claim to fame, just yet, and he or she will not be digitally altered in any way. Anyone over the age of thirteen or in their late twenties and everything in between has the potential to be interested in this magazine. Creativity is something that is instilled in everyone- whether they use the creativity or not to the fullest is another story. *Fifteen* is a way to get the creative juices flowing.

A magazine needs to be enticing in order to be noticed. Most people do not like to read, or when they do they will skim the page to grasp only the most important words, usually larger in text or in bold colors. A thriving magazine has easy to find interesting articles and something to get the reader involved. Sharp images and fun text layouts will keep the reader focused on the article or section. Contests, scholarships, and opinion polls will keep the reader intrigued because it provides a chance to participate and be a part of the magazine community. By continuously engaging the reader with a topic that is always changing and helpful assignments, the magazine will gain a large amount of circulation from a broad range of individuals.

The largest component of the magazine will be images of young artists' works. The pages will be filled with images of anything the creator can come up with. Photographs, paintings, drawings, digital renderings, makeup artistry, jewelry, clothing, graffiti, and anything else that one can put medium to in a creative manner. For those who have a way with words, poetry, lyrics, short stories, and any other form of writings are encouraged.

Included with the creative works, will also be editorials. These articles will only pertain to what the artists and writers would like to hear- advice on how to improve, best colleges or vocational schools, products to buy, and different contests and offers for scholarships. Also individuals who have gotten an internship or job in the art or writing world may submit their personal anecdotes. If someone has interviewed a creative person, his or her interview may be

submitted. The possible types of works that can be submitted are endless. The magazine, although trying to give readers' creativity a place to be noticed, is trying to give a positive and helpful message to those submitting artwork.

Similar to the articles that will be featured, the advertisements will not be focusing on anything but creative works. Success is key to staying positive. The creative fields are very difficult to be accepted into because there is a lot of negative feedback rather than positive. There are plenty of people who try to be accepted for their work but are turned away or put down. *Fifteen* will help striving artists and writers to cope with that and become better or learn how to bounce back. Many advertisements subconsciously make a person feel as if he or she is not good enough. The goal is to keep advertisements as objective as possible.

Scholarships and schools will be advertised, because education is the first step to success. Competitions will also be advertised because any type of award is a step in the right direction as well. Many competitions exist that are actually scams that steal money from those that enter. By entering a competition in my magazine, the competitor will not have to worry about being cheated. Besides those, typical commercial ads will be included pertaining to products and services that are solely for the good of artists and writers.

Included in the trial issue of *Fifteen*, are works collected from peers and advertisements from the 79th art director's annual and the October issue of Graphic Design USA. In order to collect written works and images, I created a group on facebook.com, a networking website, to advertise the idea of my magazine project. Since that initial invitation, sixty members have joined, many supporting and a handful donating their work. Paintings, photography, jewelry, and makeup artistry are amongst the items to be found. Written works include poetry, a short story, and an article about the best books for a graphic designer. Ads that have been included feature

stock images, printers, jobs, and recording studios. The chosen contest is asking for readers to send in their existing product designs for review. After handing out the trial issue, if it is a hit amongst the people viewing it, there is a future in making a much larger magazine as well as adding an online component.

This online addition could really expand the amount of readers I could send my magazine out to and also the types of media available. With a magazine, media is limited to printed or copied images and text; online, performances can be broadcasted. Film making, dancing, band performances, singing, theatrical performances may all be turned into a media file that can be embedded into the website and written about in the magazine. Online access would allow readers to further delve into the creative world and speak directly to other readers to get immediate answers and opinions using chat rooms, blogs, postings, and other networking tools. More contests, scholarships, and advice columns will be posted online to further reader involvement. Again, as with the physical magazine, the ads embedded into the website would be as objective as possible and only pertain to bettering the viewer.

Although it seems like a utopian concept, I would like to create harmony amongst the world through artistic differences. Sometimes words are not enough when said alone but when put to music or a rhythm or to replace images altogether with words, the idea can be expressed more universally. *Fifteen* is a magazine that will help individuals to express themselves better than ever before, guide and advise them to success, and provide them the recognition and praise they deserve. Between the magazine and the online component, it is a great opportunity for creative minds to begin flowing in a positive direction. The magazine's been presented giving no excuse to those who wonder why they have not been given recognition- so how will **you** get your fifteen minutes of fame?

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