

**TYPICAL DAY
IN THE LIFE OF AN EDITOR
By Lori Foster**

Monique Patterson

1) Please describe a typical day in the office.

A typical day in the office for me is made up of various meetings, answering e-mail, phone calls to authors and agents, and dealing with in-house deadlines for things from cover copy, catalogue copy, launch sheets, tip sheets, author and agent lunches. etc. There is very little reading that happens in the office.

2) How many meetings, and what type of meetings, do you attend in a typical week.

I always attend 4 meetings a week, every week. But some weeks there are more meetings scheduled. I attend editorial meetings for mass and trade, staff meetings, marketing meetings, launch meetings, editorial/marketing meetings, pub meetings, and presales meetings. And then there are a number of smaller meetings for various things that happen outside of those bigger meetings.

3) What is the process that takes place before you can make an offer on a book?

When I have a book that I want to buy, I get it around for other reads, typically to other editors, the publisher, someone in Sales, someone in Publicity, the editor-in-chief, sometimes the president, depending on the project. It's not always all of those people, but it can be all of those people. We discuss it at our editorial meeting. It is there that everyone who has read weighs in, including sales and sometimes marketing and it is decided whether or not we will be making an offer on the book. The publisher, editor-in-chief, and president are the ones who make the final decision on how much we will be offering. Sales, marketing and publicity do weigh in, but no decision is made based solely on input from one department. There is a discussion from all sides that takes place.

4) How many authors are you personally responsible for?

Right now, my list consists of about 30 authors--perhaps a few more.

5) Ball park guesstimate - how many authors have you gotten from contests, and do you recommend any type of contests?

Actually I haven't found any authors from contests, but I love judging the contests because there is always the possibility that I will come across someone I just know I have to publish. There's a lot of talent out there.

6) How much impact does a Rita win or finalist status have on you?

It has an impact because it makes me sit up and pay closer attention to this person, but it still comes down to how strong the work is and how great the read is.

7) What happens when an author turns a book in late?

What *can* happen if an author turns a book in early?

Mostly you try to keep the book on schedule and that sometimes requires putting in some wiggle room, just in case the book is a little late. A little late usually doesn't affect the schedule. When a book is very late it can force you to push the book back which can throw everything off, but sometimes stuff happens, life happens. You just try to come up with a new plan. As long as I know far enough in advance then I work with the author and agent to assess the situation and adjust the schedule. With all that said, I love it when a book comes in early. Even if I'm editing another book at the time and can't get to it right then and there, I know it's going to be no problem to keep it on schedule. Sometimes, it can even move up in the schedule.

8) Describe the best part of your job.

Describe the worst part of your job.

The best part of my job. . .hmm. I love working with the authors on the books--the actual editing, helping them shape it into what we both want it to be. I love working with an author to come up with a great title and a great cover. That's fun.

I really don't think I have a worst part of the job because I do love it, but there are some things I'd rather do without! Less meetings, less paperwork! But even when I'm moaning and groaning about that, I like the control over other aspects of the work that those things give me, so. . .I'm not sure I'd give that up either.

Cindy Hwang

1) Please describe a typical day in the office.

The typical day is about 35% dealing with correspondence (phone, emails, letters), 30% working on things related to my books but not editing, 25% on meetings (sometimes more, depending on how many meetings that day and how long they are--can typically last at least an hour), and about 10% to reading submissions and editing manuscripts.

2) How many meetings, and what type of meetings, do you attend in a typical week.

There are about 4 to 5 meetings a week, but often different meetings. We have meetings to discuss cover concepts twice a week, and we have meetings to strategize and market books, but not necessarily every week. We have editorial meetings once a week where we discuss possible book projects we're interested in pursuing.

3) What is the process that takes place before you can make an offer on a book?

If I'm interested in pursuing a book, I will often need to get second reads by other editors to see if they agree about the book. If they do, sometimes the editorial director and publisher will want to read as well. If everyone likes it, then I will get the go-ahead to make an offer. In fiction, editorial considerations are much more important than marketing considerations. There isn't even a marketing or sales person at the weekly editorial meeting.

4) How many authors are you personally responsible for?

Excluding anthologies, currently about 35 authors. Including anthologies, over 40.

5) Ball park guesstimate - how many authors have you gotten from contests, and do you recommend any type of contests?

I've had a lot of success finding authors in contests--I would say about four authors so far. I think all the RWA chapter contests are good--don't overlook any local ones.

6) How much impact does a Rita win or finalist status have on you?

It definitely helps someone stand out from the crowd, but ultimately it won't matter if I don't love the voice or the material.

7) What happens when an author turns a book in late?
What *can* happen if an author turns a book in early?

It depends how late--if it's only a week or two, the schedule can usually accommodate it. If it's more, than that can affect everything from the cover and cover copy to spine size

and manuscript pagination, as well as moving it to a later month. If a book is early, sometimes it's possible to get an earlier pub date than planned, but not always.

8) Describe the best part of your job.

Describe the worst part of you job.

The best part of my job is working with my authors and finding new voices.

The worst part is never having enough time to catch up! Editors are always behind on their reading.

Kate Duffy

At Kensington, the editors are the gatekeepers. What this means in practical terms is that wherever possible, we talk to you for the rest of the company and to the rest of the company for you. So for example, if you are missing your author copies or need royalty info or any of a hundred other things, we follow up.

I was asked to describe a typical day. All of the following happened last Friday.

Email and phone calls - from a request by the sub rights department forwarded from our German agent that I check to see whether they can publish an author's work in Germany using her better known pseudonym (this takes 3 phone calls and 2 emails to accomplish) to people enquiring about the status of their manuscripts to resolving a fight with an agent (I still would like to smack her).

All in all, I fielded more than 20 phone calls and double that amount of email in the morning.

Turned 2 manuscripts into production for copyediting and sent through the paperwork so they could get paid.

Changed travel plans for March. Instead of going to Vancouver (Hilary is going in my place) Kensington wants me to go to the London Book Fair and they are at exactly the same time. 5 phone calls and 5 emails later, I am still working out the logistics.

Discussed book I want to buy with the publisher. She has read the first 50 pages and thinks it is too British for our market. I address her concerns and am waiting for the other three people I asked to read the same partial to get back to me. **What happens if they all want it?** 3mos running profit & loss

Lunch with author, art director and director of publicity. **Author visiting?**

Copy editor sick, author came in from Connet to go over edits in one day.

Realize I have put the wrong title on a Dec. Brava and when I get back to the office, I discuss this with the publisher. She seems relieved I have come to my senses.

Open mail. Well, some of it anyway before I am called into a quick **schedule meeting**.

I have 7 or 8 meetings a week. They range from 2 ½ hours – 30-45min long each.

My MM Brava schedule is not coming together so I promise to work on it over the weekend so we can revisit first thing on Monday.

(Kate has different schedules for different lines.)

Shoot down another editor's idea for a title and explain why I don't think it's right. She agrees.

Go over contract issues that have arisen in 2 contract negotiations, one of which is a deal breaker for us and I tell the **general counsel** lawyer who draws up contracts to let the agent know that.

Sign off on **catalog blues** –

(So what are catalog blues?) - text and pictures before catalogue is printed - and 3 cover mechanicals – color xeros, check ISBN,copy, etc... (this is where you'd make corrections) and four chromalins – final stages, making changes very expensive - \$500 every time. Come up with cover line for one of the mechanicals after the publisher says we need one. Go over cover copy with the copy department and after they make a few changes, I email the copy to the authors and wait for their feedback and updated bios which I then cut and paste onto the copy and send back to the copy department.

One of my authors sends me a schedule of some autographings and local publicity she is doing which I forwarded to publicity and they sent it on to sales.

Art director stops by to show me work-in-progress cover that I love and we will talk about at Tuesday's art meeting.

(Kate is) **HIGHER ON THE FOOD CHAIN** – editorial director – which means more meetings, oversee editors, sign off on other editors' contracts, titles, acquisitions, etc...