

Title of entry: St. Thomas Magazine

Category number and title: 7b. Most Improved Alumni//Institution Magazine

Institution: University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minn.

Name and contact information for individual submitting entry: Editor, Brian C. Brown, (651) 962-6423, bcbrown@stthomas.edu

Names of all individuals responsible for entry: Brian Brown, Patty Petersen, Sara Klomp, Mike Ekern, Bill Kirchgessner, Doug Hennes and Nadine Friederichs

General description of the entry: St. Thomas magazine is the flagship publication of the university. The magazine serves as the primary resource for communicating to both our alumni and the larger community. With emphasis on cultural awareness and intellectual curiosity, the magazine provides timely, thoughtful and inspiring news, feature stories, images and design that reflect the vibrant St. Thomas community.

Goals and objectives of the project:

We aspire to...

- Be a credible source of information on issues affecting the university
- Engage readers with compelling, thought-provoking and entertaining stories
- Reinforce the pride our audience has in the university
- Reflect the diverse voices and activities of the university
- Address difficult issues in an objective and informative manner
- Educate our readers
- Tell our stories from a human-interest point of view
- Respect the differing opinions and ideas of others
- Engage alumni and friends to support the university as donors, volunteers and attendees at events
- Inform our audience of the role St. Thomas has in the local, regional and world community

Description of how project fits into overall institutional and/or advancement

goals: We have the great privilege of communicating to our alumni and friends three times every year. Our audience relies on the magazine to provide an objective point of view about the individuals, events and academic pursuits that help define the university. We don't take this responsibility lightly.

It is our hope that the magazine resonates with our audience, instilling a great sense of pride and loyalty to a place that has meant so much to them. If we do our job effectively – if we tell the university's story in a compelling way – our audience will be inspired to contribute both time and resources in support of the university's mission.

Audience: 81,000 alumni, donors, parents, faculty and staff, graduate students and friends of the university.

Total number of professional and support staff who worked on the program:

8 – Senior editor, managing editor, creative director, photographer, marketing and communications director, vice president of university and government relations, alumni representative and alumni notes coordinator.

All original photography is taken by the photography staff. All stories are written by magazine staffers (see above), University Relations staff or freelancers. We generally hire one freelance writer – usually an alumnus – per issue.

Program budget and unit costs where applicable. Do not include staff salaries or postage in calculating total cost and cost per unit.

Total cost: \$114,000 x 3 issues = \$343,000

Cost per unit: \$1.40

Any special circumstances or challenges faced: Our publication has gone through a number of changes in the last two years. The magazine's editor and photography supervisor both retired after more than 60 collective years on the job. In fall 2008, we launched the first substantial redesign of the magazine in more than 25 years. While there have been many challenges during this time of transition, we have embraced the changes and the opportunities to improve the magazine.

We also have the ongoing challenge of trying to represent seven schools and colleges with a magazine that is published only three times a year. Each of these schools and colleges has its own magazine and/or newsletter, so we must be thoughtful and diligent about what information is included in each publication.

An additional challenge has been the request to incorporate a capital campaign section into the magazine for the next five years (going from 64 to 72 pages).

Documented results, measurements of effectiveness: Because print publications are primarily a one-way, "push" form of communication, we often depend on anecdotal evidence for measuring our success. Feedback from our audience has been positive, and we continue to seek our audience's input in a number of ways – through formal groups, publications contests, online surveys and casual conversations.

There are, however, a few "measures of effectiveness." We have focused a great deal of time and effort on the online presence of our magazine. Specifically, we have begun adding exclusive online content ("WebEncore" pieces) that help to provide our audience with a more rich and resonant experience. And the effort has paid off. We average more than 6,000 unique visits to the magazine website for each new issue.

Lastly, St. Thomas magazine was chosen as the primary vehicle to publish capital campaign information because it is the only publication mailed to all of our constituencies. The money raised during the campaign is reported in each issue. And while we are not directly responsible for raising money for the campaign, we are responsible for the stories that inspire others to support the university.