



## Self-publish a magazine

● By Elliot Jay Stocks, founder, *8Faces* magazine, [www.8faces.com](http://www.8faces.com)

Elliot Jay Stocks is a designer, speaker and author whose work can often be found in books, blogs and magazines. Stocks is also one half of Bristol / Bath creative agency Viewport Industries, and is founder of *8Faces*, a bi-annual typography magazine (above).

One of the ingredients you need to start self-publishing is naivety. It's not necessarily as huge a deal as a lot of people think it is, but there are parts that aren't particularly glamorous, such as securing partnerships, chasing invoices and managing contributors.

Having confidence in what you're doing is important because without that determination these projects would never get off the ground. But it's also about recognising your strengths and weaknesses. After the first issue of *8Faces*, I wasn't very happy with the way that I'd designed certain spreads, so I commissioned my friend Jon Tan and he massively improved the magazine.

When it comes to making your idea a reality, the first step is to get an idea of costs. Talk to printers about exactly what you want to do. There are ways to save money: you don't have to have thick paper stock or foil blocking on the cover. At the beginning, a lot of people were prepared to work on *8Faces* for free. But as soon as we had more advertisers in place, I made sure that we could pay people properly.

Discussions about shipping and distribution aren't particularly sexy, but those details are important. The first issue of *8Faces* was distributed by my mother-in-law taking the magazines down to the local post office. After that, we switched to a professional distributor connected with our printer.

Having a deadline, even if it's purely self-imposed, keeps you on course. And as soon as you pass that on to other people, those deadlines become locked so you have no excuse to wimp out. Build up buzz by talking about the magazine on blogs and spreading the word organically.

Being forced to learn on the job because there's no other way to deliver the product is a really great experience. I wouldn't necessarily advocate picking something that you don't know anything about to do, but straying out of your comfort zone can lead to something better. The good thing about a magazine is that you can improve over time. The first issue doesn't have to be amazing: you can build upon it and each issue becomes better than the last.