



School Recipe Book

These notes have been compiled following the publishing of the “Waitakere on a Plate” fundraising recipe book by Waitakere Primary School’s (WPS) Friends of the School group (FOS) in association with the PTA.

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Vision for the book

The focus for the WPS book was as a keepsake for the local community as well as a practical book of recipes. We were aware that the books could net a great financial return to aid in purchasing a shade sail for our school pool and IT equipment.

Our strong connection with Te Henga/Bethell's Beach meant that we were able to feature images from the beach and community throughout the book, as well as the school and food, appealing to a wide audience.

Format

It helps to get hold of books produced by other schools to give you an idea of format and what to include. You will soon know what form you want your book to take - we have seen everything from Edmonds-style books to lush coffee table books. The specification for the book entirely depends on how many recipes you want to include, and how spacious or packed the layout is.

The WPS book is 200pp+, A5 landscape, canadian bind, full colour throughout. We opted for a the canadian bind with a matte laminated cover and spine, for the convenience of a book that can open flat for easy use. We did a print run of 700 books.

Printing

Finding a good printer to support you during the printing process is essential, and also to get the best possible price to maximise profit. Enquire within the school for someone connected to the printing industry. Negotiate a good price for the printing or suggest sponsorship in return for advertising space. Be wary of using a print broker as the costs need to be very transparent, and there is little room for people to be "clipping the ticket".

Costings

Cook books can net a great return for the school, so having an idea of how much you want to invest, and how much you want to make can help with crunching the numbers.

We worked on a 100% profit scenario, based on a 100% markup on book production costs - with production costs covered by advertising revenue. We aimed for \$10,000 return. Don't forget to consider the impact of the GST component if you are a charity.



Advertising

Advertising and sponsorship in the book was primarily to generate revenue to offset costs. It also provided a way for local businesses to support the project. Some books we looked at grouped the advertising towards the back of the book, but we chose to spread ours throughout the book.

With hindsight we did not charge enough for advertising, as we had good support and feel that perhaps we could have made more. On the other hand, the uptake may not have been so great had it been more costly. We achieved our goal of covering the production costs.

We set up an email address for our book and an Advertising Co-ordinator was appointed to manage the enquiries and bookings, and liaise with the designer. Volunteers dropped rate cards into local businesses. The rate cards were typically not very effective on their own without a personal visit, and preferably have someone who knows the business do that. Some larger companies had a longer process for approving advertising funds, so approaching them early in the process was recommended.

Promotion to school

The cook book was promoted as the PTA's major fundraiser for 2014. (Other fundraising was limited during the year to keep the focus on the book.)

All children and staff were encouraged to submit a family favourite recipe to the cook book via a take home flyer / submission form. There were regular reminders in the school newsletters.

To ensure a good uptake for the book, it needs to be well supported by teachers and management. Our book was promoted through the children's Home Learning Challenges (whereby they could sign off a challenge by choosing and testing a recipe to submit to the book).

To further promote the project some initial draft spreads of the book were produced, and an advertising rate card drawn up.

Promotion to community

Once we had clear idea of the book, it's size and specification, along with some draft spreads, we were able to set up a Facebook page to build interest. Visit our page to see how we use it:

www.facebook.com/WPSCookBook



Sub-committee:

WPS FOS formed a sub-committee of capable and interested people to undertake the project. It helps to identify who has good skills and time to get involved. The roles listed below had some cross over - people often contributed in several areas.

Editor

- project manager
- manage the collection of the recipes
- categorise the recipes
- delegate recipes to sub editors
 - liaise with management / PTA
 - liaise with parents

Sub-editors (we had 7 + a final proofreader)

- type handwritten submissions
 - edit recipes to a standard format
 - check recipes for clarity
- (we had a professional copy editor at school who did the lion's share)

Designer

- graphic designer to plan and design the book
- produce quality print-ready files
- liaise with the photographers
- liaise with the printer



Photographers (we had 6)

- Find people who are good amateur or professional photographers who are willing to get involved with the food styling and photography.
- We had a lead photographer who co-ordinated the other photographers
- The lead photographer also co-ordinated the recipe testing
- Appeal to local amateur photographers who would be keen to be in print without being paid

Recipe testers

- A group of volunteers who are happy to test recipes at their own expense.
- Helps if they are foodie people who like cooking and will do a good job of interpreting recipes and help with the styling.

Advertising Co-ordinator

- Someone to manage the email enquiries and facilitate the bookings
- Liaise with the designer
- Manage advertising material
- Liaise with PTA treasurer

Teacher Liaison

As with most PTA's there is a teacher liaison, who also was party to the book project and helped to promote it within the staff.

Decision making

We utilised a small core team of 2-3 people to make the majority of decisions – if we had run each decision past the PTA or the wider group this book may never have happened!

File Sharing

We utilised Dropbox for file sharing for the project.



Timeline

Term 1: Collection of recipes

Term 2: Production - photography and design

Term 3: Production - proofing and printing

Term 4: Sales for Christmas

Selection of recipes

We took an inclusive approach to the selection of recipes, however some books have been curated to deliver a specific vision.

We did receive a number of double-ups (particularly in the baking recipes) whereby we asked that family to re-submit. We also had a range of “spare” recipes from PTA/FOS families which we drew on to fill gaps in some sections.

Testing and photography

This was a challenging part of the process due to the sheer volume of recipes. After entertaining a few different scenarios, our lead photographer co-ordinated a group of volunteer testers - she would then collect baking from the school office, or visit people’s homes to photograph some of the recipes, also getting photos of some of the children at the same time.

We were also fortunate to have a group of capable photographers within our team, so a large portion of recipes were tested and photographed that way. We allowed a whole term for this part of the project.

Design process

We had already come up with a look, feel and layout for the book - so once we had the recipes and photography ready the layout process could begin.

It would be my recommendation that the layout process doesn’t begin till all the recipes are in and all the photography has been completed. Our process was somewhat drawn out due to being drip-fed the content over a few months, which led to a number of revisions. This also applies to the advertising material - particularly if you want to integrate it throughout the book as opposed to a dedicated section.



Advertising material

We came up with a rate card and spec sheet for potential advertisers. Many were able to provide their own finished ad artwork. A lot had no ad artwork, so we offered to create it for them - this may sound generous, but by doing this we minimised any ugly ads and kept it all to a high standard. We used a second designer for to produce some of the ads. With hindsight a surcharge for ad creation could have been charged, but at the risk of receiving sub-standard ad material.

Proofing

We produced several proofs of the book - mainly for early proofing by the team.

Once we had a final draft, a copy was left at the school office for 1 week. Families were encouraged to come and see their recipe and check any details. Our proofreader took a final draft for checking and a full read through (she had not been involved till this stage, so were those critical 'fresh eyes').

Production

The books took about 3 weeks to produce at the printers.

Sales

While the draft of the book was on display in the office, we offered pre-sales of the book. The pre-sales were available for a limited time, and we did a 3-for-\$60 deal. This was well supported with around 400 books pre-sold. By the end of the term we had sold over 500 books.

We had a book stall at our school arts evening with a number of cakes and treats made from the recipes in the book for sale. This was a great chance for families who had not seen the book to look and purchase.

We also sold the books at the Te Henga family day. A number of casual sales were made regularly over the summer and fresh interest occurred following a story about the book in the Western Leader.