FEMINIST-INFORMED PROCESS MANAGEMENT
AT SECOND STORY PRESS

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B.A., Trent University, 2007

Project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Publishing in the Master of Publishing Program.

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Fall 2008

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ABSTRACT

Second Story Press is a feminist press with a small staff that operates using many of the principles of process management, as defined and elucidated by publishing management analyst Ralph Hancox. This report outlines how the management of the press has developed an intuitive application of process management strategies to fit the mandate and scale of the company, and further, how these successful management strategies are in line with the feminist philosophy and ethics of Second Story Press.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Second Story Press is a feminist, women-run press with a small staff based in Toronto,

Ontario. Founded in 1988, the press has undergone a number of major changes before

settling at its current structure, with a single owner-publisher as manager. One of only a

handful of women's presses in operation worldwide today, Second Story is committed to

publishing ground-breaking and progressive books of interest to women and children. Its

feminist and progressive ideologies are central to the press' publishing program and to its

day-to-day operations.

There are almost countless definitions of feminism in use by proponents and

detractors of the term, depending on the context. The Stanford Encyclopedia of

Philosophy offers a good starting point for examining some of the basic tenets of feminist

thought:

> Women deserve respect equal to that shown to men for performing equal
> or equivalent work.
> Women have been historically oppressed, and feminists must work to end
> this oppression.
> Oppression takes many forms, and is not limited to overt examples such as
> lesser pay for equal work. Oppression exists in any situation in which women
> are subjugated or restricted due to male dominance and imposition of
> traditional gender roles.[1]

Many feminists are also progressive. "Progressive" activities are defined by the Oxford

English Dictionary as "advocating or working towards change or reform in society, esp. in

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[1]Haslanger, Sally and Nancy Tuana, "Topics in Feminism." The Stanford Encyclopedia of
Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.)
<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/feminism-topics/>

political or religious matters; committed to progress, forward-looking,"[2] and a progressive

individual or group is defined as holding "... liberal views; an advocate or supporter of social,

religious, or political progress or reform,"[3] normally in the direction of social, religious or

political equality. Progressive feminists believe that the fight against oppression is not

limited to gender equality, but is intersectional and multi-faceted: oppression in any form,

including racism, homophobia, ageism and ableism, among others, is a reinforcing of

patriarchal norms and must be deconstructed.[4] Second Story Press incorporates

progressivism as well as feminism into its program, publishing anti-oppressive books of all

types and genres.

Feminist thinking in a business setting is not only expressed through the type of

content produced by the organization. A logical extension of progressive, anti-oppressive

theory is egalitarianism, defined as the belief that that all "people ought to be treated as

equals—as possessing equal fundamental worth and dignity and as equally morally

considerable."[5] This principle does not assume that everyone has equal skills and talents and

is capable of equal levels of responsibility. It simply means that everyone is deserving of

respect and has intrinsic value as a person equal to anyone else's. In a business environment,

the principle of egalitarianism means that every employee deserves respect for the work that

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[2] "Progressive, adj. and n." The Oxford English Dictionary Online.
<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/display/50189656?keytype=ref&ijkey=P5O9jiOYXPx62>.
Revised September 2008.
[3] "Progressive, adj. and n." 2008.
[4] Haslanger 2008.
[5] Arneson, Richard, "Egalitarianism." The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.)
<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/egalitarianism/>.

she[6] does, and that her contributions should be valued as highly as any others. A business

model based on strict hierarchy and reporting lines is typically rejected. A feminist business

environment, as in the case of Second Story Press, is usually women-run, based on the

belief that more women should own companies, a role traditionally taken on by men. All

employees (often primarily or entirely female) work collaboratively and share a common

goal of bettering the company. It does not necessarily mean that there is no manager or

that all responsibility is divided equally, only that contributions from all staff members are

sought and respected.

The management and operations of Second Story Press represent an intuitive

application of process management, a method of management endorsed by publishing

management analyst Ralph Hancox in his book *Managing the Publishing Process*.

Collaborative management and a strong respect for all employee's contributions, elements

prominently featured in feminist management, are two key components of process

management. Process management is the antithesis of functional management, which is

based on an "assembly-line" style of division of tasks and responsibilities with no clear

communication lines between departments. Instead, process management in a publishing

house "is a recognition that sequential functions must be integrated and be generally

understood by all those who undertake the publishing process."[7] A manager successfully

practicing process management in her company will view the entire publishing process as a

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[6] When the singular feminine pronoun is used in this paper in a generic sense, it is intended and should be understood to include all genders.
[7] Hancox, Ralph. *Managing the Publishing Process*. Vancouver: The Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing, Simon Fraser University. Section 2, p. 14.

complex network of inter-related tasks, encourage open lines of communication, and

engage all staff members in a collaborative work environment whereby all contributions are

valued.

Hancox sees the application of process management throughout an organization

and the basis for its business strategies as six interlinked elements:

> Purpose and mission drive strategy.
> Strategy drives operational planning.
> Operational plans drive management.
> Management drives process organization.
> Effective organization drives results.
> Results drive survival and continuity.[8]

These interlinked components represent a continuum, whereby each element informs not

only the immediately succeeding element, but all other elements which follow after that.

The successful integration of a well-constructed purpose and mission statement, for

instance, informs not only strategy, but operational planning, management, process

organization, results, and survival and continuity. This central continuum of process

management is explored in more detail throughout this report as it applies to the

management of Second Story Press.

As is already evident in this introduction, and as illustrated in detail throughout this

report, many of the attitudes and principles behind process management are well in line

with the feminist ideals of Second Story Press. When Margie Wolfe became the sole

owner and publisher of Second Story Press in 2000, she did not set out with the intention

to run a process management style of organization. Rather, Wolfe has intuitively adapted a

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[8] Hancox 1-3.

management style that satisfies not only her feminist ethics, but her desire for a strong, successful, well-managed organization as well. Informed by the management she participated in at Women's Press and in the early years of Second Story's operations, Wolfe's current management philosophy is built on the feminist values that drive her publishing program *and* on solid managerial experience: what has and has not worked in her over thirty years of publishing management. This paper explores how, with attention to each element of the process management continuum, the management style practiced at Second Story Press is in fact an excellent example of a successful process management framework, which happens to fall well in line with the philosophy and ethics of the press and of its publisher.

2. SECOND STORY PRESS IN CONTEXT

I) NICHE AND FEMINIST PUBLISHERS IN CANADA

The survival and success of Second Story Press, a medium-sized Canadian niche press, has never been assured, as the publishing industry in Canada faces serious financial challenges. The Book Publishing Industry Development Program (BPIDP), which provides grants to publishers in Canada, has increased its funding nearly every year since the inception of the program, to a total of $27,055,404 to 230 publishers in Canada in 2008.[9] *The Book Report 2005-06* revealed that in the decade of 1996-2006, there was a 21 percent increase in the number of publishers receiving grants from the program.[10] This means, of course, that there are more publishers in Canada than there used to be. It also means that there are more publishers requiring government aid. The median profit margin of BPIDP recipients over a seven-year period is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1: MEDIAN PROFIT MARGIN OF BPIDP RECIPIENTS IN CANADA[11][12]

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Profit margin	2.3%	2.9%	4.8%	3.55%	3.64%	3.51%	2.99%

[9] Book Publishing Industry Development Program, Canadian Heritage.
<http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/ac-ca/progs/padie-bpidp/index_e.cfm> Last modified August 28, 2007.
[10] "The Book Report 2005-2006." Book Publishing Industry Development Program, Canadian Heritage. <http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/ac-ca/progs/padie-bpidp/reports/bookreport/05-06/index_e.cfm> Last modified April 3, 2007.
[11] "The Book Report 2005-2006." Canadian Heritage.
[12] "Publishing Measures." Canadian Heritage. 2008. p. 1.

In 2008, the median profit margin of small (under $200,000 in annual revenue) and medium-sized (annual revenue between $200,000 and $1,000,000) English-language publishers was much lower, at 2.16 percent and 2.96 percent, respectively, than those of large companies (annual revenue of $1,000,000 to $5,000,000), at 4.60 percent. Judging by these statistics alone, small and medium-sized presses in Canada, on average, have a tougher time maintaining a high level of profitability than do large ones. While profitability is only one marker of financial success and cannot be taken as indicative of company health as a whole, it is an important indicator.

Second Story Press is a niche press with annual revenue that places it in BPIDP's medium-sized press category. Small and medium-sized niche presses in Canada face additional challenges that non-niche presses do not. For example, in her 1999 Master of Publishing project report, Karen Alpin-Payton focused on the challenges faced by Arsenal Pulp Press, a British Columbia-based niche publisher. At the time of her study, Arsenal Pulp Press was known in British Columbia as a pop-culture and gay/lesbian press, and sometimes found the label limiting. Alpin-Payton's study points out a major weakness of Arsenal Pulp Press' market image: many, if not most, booksellers and industry players familiar with Arsenal Pulp perceived it *solely* as an niche publisher. Because of the small size of the market interested in its niche titles, Arsenal Pulp Press had tried to branch into publishing more mainstream titles in the hope of increasing sales and market share. However, Alpin-Payton's study showed that the press found that "putting one foot in the mainstream market" in order to increase sales was difficult because most booksellers

perceived their books as being niche-only and would not trust their more mainstream

titles.[13]

Arsenal Pulp Press faced the challenge of marrying two goals:

1. To produce books that will appeal to a general audience so as to increase
market share and profitability.
2. To continue to publish books appealing to an alternative audience so as
not to lose its reader base, and to remain true to its mission and ideals.[14]

By their nature, niche books in general are less likely to become bestsellers than

more mainstream titles. The balance between publishing for a niche audience and for a

general audience is a struggle for many progressive publishers, which face the challenge of

balancing their politics with publishing books popular enough to garner sales. As will be

shown, Second Story Press has been particularly successful in inserting its titles into the

mainstream market.

Feminist presses represent a particular type of niche press. Second Story Press is one

of very few remaining feminist presses worldwide.[15] California-based Seal Press is a well-

known American feminist press: "inspired by the simple yet radical notion that a book can

change a woman's life, Seal Press is devoted to publishing titles that inform, reveal, engage,

delight, and support women of all ages and backgrounds."[16] Other American feminist

presses include New York University-based Feminist Press, Radical Women Publishers,

and Red Letter Press. There are only a few other women's presses scattered around the

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[13] Alpin-Payton, Karen. Beyond Survival: The Metamorphosis of Arsenal Pulp Press. Simon
Fraser University, 2000. p. 28.
[14] Alpin-Payton 28.
[15] Literary Marketplace. <http://www.literarymarketplace.com/lmp/us/index_us.asp> 2008.
[16] Seal Press website. <http://www.sealpress.com/home.html> 2007-2008.

world, including the Women's Press and Virago Press in London, Honno Press in Wales, and a non-profit press called Women Unlimited in India.

In Canada, Second Story Press, Sumach Press, Women's Press and les editions du remue-ménage are the only women's presses currently in operation. Press Gang Publishers was a once-successful and long-running Vancouver-based women's press which began operations in 1970, but declared bankruptcy and closed in 2002.[17] Today, the existing Canadian women's presses are based only in the major cities of Toronto and Montreal.

Les editions du remue-ménage was founded in Montreal in 1975, the International Year of the Woman, by a collective of women seeking to give a voice to female writers. The press' mandate is to advance the literary condition of women and women's issues, and it has published over one hundred fifty books to date, spanning genres of literary fiction, education, social work, history, politics and visual art. Remue-ménage is the only French-language publisher in North America which publishes exclusively on women's issues.[18]

Toronto-based Sumach Press, founded in 2000 after a split with Second Story Press, operates with three owners and publishes the Women's Issues Publishing Program— "dynamic feminist titles that explore the role of women and the social and political issues affecting them"[19]—as well as literary fiction for adult and young adult readers. This press publishes only a small number of books per season, but is successful in its mission of

[17] "Press Gang Publishers fonds." SFU Archives and Records Management Department Online Finding Aids. <http://www.sfu.ca/archives2/F-184/F-184.html> Last updated July 2006.
[18] "Historique." Les editions du remue-menage website. <http://www.editions-remuemenage.qc.ca/remue.php?page=1>
[19] "About Us." Sumach Press website. <http://www.sumachpress.com/aboutus.html>

producing works by and for women in a variety of genres. The Fall 2008 season saw the release of five new Sumach Press titles, including a dayplanner.[20]

Women's Press has been in operation for over thirty years. It adapted during a period of financial difficulty and continues operations today as an imprint of Canadian Scholars' Press. It publishes for both the academic and trade markets, with genres spanning social sciences, fiction, poetry, and creative non-fiction.[21] Second Story Press traces its origins to Women's Press.

II) HISTORY AND GENESIS OF SECOND STORY PRESS

Women's Press, founded in 1972, claims to be the first publisher in North America to publish specifically non-sexist, non-racist books. In the 1970s, this commitment to progressive titles put the press outside the publishing mainstream. The press initially received newspaper coverage and media attention because of its willingness to publish on previously-taboo topics such as queer issues and sexual abuse. With a commitment to publishing ground-breaking works with special relevance to women's issues, including books on gender studies, motherhood, women's health, disability and more, Women's Press was an exciting non-profit, collective-run venture. In 1976, Margie Wolfe became a collective member, immediately sharing full responsibility for the organization with several other women.

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[20] "Fall 2008." Sumach Press website. <http://www.sumachpress.com/newbooks.htm>
[21] "Women's Press." Women's Press website. <http://www.womenspress.ca>. 2008.

The decision to structure Women's Press as a collective was directly informed by the feminist philosophy of the founding members of the press. A strictly hierarchical organization is seen by some feminists as a reflection of patriarchal norms in society, where status and power are wielded by only a select few.[22] To this end, the founders of Women's Press believed that a feminist press should strive for an egalitarian employee structure to the fullest extent. In the collective model, any new partner entering the organization immediately had as influential a vote in publishing decisions as any other partner, even those who had been with the organization since its inception. It was therefore possible for a new partner to join and try to change the editorial direction of the press.

Wolfe left Women's Press in 1988 with three other collective members to form Second Story Press as a four-way partnership. Choosing to take their favourite elements from their experiences at Women's Press, the partners retained the feminist model of egalitarian decision-making, but Wolfe and her colleagues were owners of the new for-profit press. Hiring of new employees would not alter the ownership structure; new staff members would not gain full decision-making power. An ownership model provided security: "No one could come along and take the press away from us," explains Wolfe.[23]

Second Story Press operated with four owners until 2000, when two of the co-owners, along with another Second Story staff member, left to open Sumach Press. One of the new owners of Sumach described the split to *Quill & Quire* as amicable and cited "a

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[22] Haslanger 2008.
[23] Wolfe, Margie. Information interview with Julia Horel, August 11, 2008.

divergence in vision and goals" as the reason for the change.[24] As part of the buyout

agreement that left Wolfe as sole owner of Second Story, Sumach Press retained the rights

to forty of Second Story Press' titles published before 2000. The fourth former owner of

Second Story had been a silent partner since 1988, and remains with the press today as an

investor and advisor.

Today, Second Story Press, under Wolfe's independent ownership, publishes self-

described ground-breaking works of particular relevance for women and children. Since

2000, Second Story's children's program in particular has expanded, and the press has

developed a strong reputation for its Holocaust Remembrance series of books for youth.

Second Story Press has grown from a two-person operation to one with a staff of four full-

time, two part-time and a rotating complement of interns. Canadian distribution is

handled by University of Toronto Press and American distribution by Orca Books.

Canadian sales are done through Kate Walker and Company. Dedicated distributors also

exist in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

Second Story Press has remained true to many of the founding tenets of its mother

company, Women's Press: committed to its feminist and progressive philosophies and to

producing ground-breaking books of interest to women. The editorial mix of genres and

types of books published, however, has changed. In its early years, Second Story published a

number of scholarly books, as Women's Press did and continues to do. Since Wolfe took

sole ownership of Second Story Press in 2000, scholarly books are no longer published,

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[24] Askew, Kim. "Second Story staffers launch new Toronto press." In *Quill & Quire*. June 16, 2000. <http://www.quillandquire.com/news/article.cfm?article_id=4213>

making Second Story a trade publisher only. Second Story Press also published few

children's books in its early years. The picture book dominated the market, and it was a

challenge to publish progressive books in a picture book format. Since 2000, however,

Second Story has had major success with its children's book program. Once the press began

to sell international rights to a few of its picture books, it began to take a more serious

approach to publishing children's books and made it an important part of its program. "I

believe that you can broach the most difficult or controversial subjects with a child if you

present it in an appropriate manner," says Wolfe.[25] This credo is key to Second Story's

children's book acquisitions. Wolfe believes that she does best with children's books that

have a clear and defined focus, with "something to say." "Fluffy" books, as Wolfe terms

them—children's books with no particular plot, such as alphabet books or board books—

can be very sweet and charming, not to mention popular, but they are not right for Second

Story.

One of Second Story's Spring 2008 books illustrates what Wolfe means when she

says she publishes books "with something to say." *Lily and the Paper Man* by Rebecca

Upjohn is a sweet and charming picture book with a message:

> Walking with her mother on the way home from school one day, Lily
> bumps straight into a gruff and untidy-looking man selling papers on the
> street. Frightened, Lily insists on taking the bus home every day for fear she
> will run into him again. But when the weather turns cold, Lily starts to see
> the Paper Man differently; she sees his bare toes through the holes in his
> boots and his thin shirt through the holes in his coat. Then Lily comes up
> with a wonderful idea ...[26]

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[25] Wolfe-Horel interview, August 11, 2008.
[26] Second Story Press Fall 2008 Catalogue, p. 16.

Lily and the Paper Man features a believable, empathetic character. Her realization that the Paper Man is cold and poor comes slowly, and her decision to help him by giving him some of her father's old clothes is perfectly age-appropriate. *Lily* broaches a difficult subject, but does so within a charming and well-written story, which allows it to sell in the mainstream market.

One of the reasons Second Story Press has expanded and focused on its children's program in recent years is because it is easier to be innovative with children's books than it is with adult books. Because so many subjects have traditionally been considered taboo for children, Second Story is able to publish books that are unique in the marketplace. Some examples include: *Mom and Mum are Getting Married!*, a picture book about a child with lesbian parents; *101 Ways to Dance*, a collection of short stories about sexual awakening for teen readers; and Where's *Mom's Hair? A Family's Journey Through Cancer*, a picture book.

Though the number of titles on its children's list now exceeds that of its adult list, Second Story Press continues to publish many high-quality works of adult fiction and non-fiction of particular interest to women. One of its Fall 2008 titles is *The Madwoman of Bethlehem* by Rosine Nimeh-Mailloux, a fictional account of a woman in Bethlehem in the 1950s who feigned insanity in order to avoid the death penalty for the murder of her abusive husband. Like other Second Story books, *Madwoman* focuses on an untold story viewed from a woman's perspective. Another recent release is the non-fiction *Reconcilable Differences*, in which journalist Cate Cochran profiles ten couples who have chosen unorthodox ways to keep their families together when their marriages have failed. In the author's own story, she and her ex-husband live in separate halves (upper and lower) of the

same house, while their children move freely between them. This alternative look at family dynamics is precisely the type of unusual subject matter relevant to women and children that Second Story seeks out.

Second Story Press books have been critically successful. Many Second Story titles are multiple award-winners. Among other awards, Rebecca Upjohn's *Lily and the Paper Man* won the ForeWord Book of the Year Award – Gold Children's Picture Book in 2007, Kathy Stinson's *101 Ways to Dance* was shortlisted for the 2007 Canadian Library Association Young Adult Canadian Book Award, and the books in the Holocaust Remembrance Series for Young Readers have won, among a long list of other awards, the Ontario Library Association Red Maple Award, the Association of Jewish Libraries Sydney Taylor Award, and the Canadian Library Association Book of the Year for Children Award.[27] One of Second Story's young adult novels, *Child of Dandelions* by Shenaaz Nanji, was shortlisted for the Governor General's Award in 2008.

Second Story Press books also garner positive reviews from a variety of sources. A review of Ken Setterington's 2004 picture book *Mom and Mum are Getting Married!* in the *Canadian Review of Materials* magazine calls the book a "ground-breaking new release" and goes on to congratulate the author for "keeping a light touch in his story. His goal of providing an open and accepting context for readers to ask questions and discuss ideas might otherwise have become heavy-handed or theme-driven."[28] *CM* magazine also reviewed Kathy Kacer's *The Diary of Laura's Twin*, a 2008 YA release in the Holocaust

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[27] Second Story Press Fall 2008 catalogue.
[28] Nielsen, Valerie. Review: *Mom and Mum are Getting Married!* In *Canadian Review of Materials*. Volume 11, No. 6. November 12, 2004.

Remembrance Series for Young Readers, and tells potential readers that "Kacer has

carefully crafted this novel, writing two parallel stories set 65 years apart, stories that are

equally engaging ... Sara's journal is so well-written that you forget it is historical fiction as

you read."[29] Second Story Press' adult books also receive positive reviews. For example,

Cochran's *Reconcilable Differences* was reviewed by *Herizons* magazine, whose reviewer says

the book "proves that many kinds of relationships are possible and offers valuable

encouragement to any family that might otherwise have been afraid to imagine something

different."[30]

Though it can be challenging to expand beyond a feminist niche, the awards and

positive reviews show that Second Story Press continues to make its presence felt in the

mainstream market with books that "say something" to both progressive and not-yet-

progressive readers. Second Story celebrates its twentieth anniversary in 2008 with the

release of thirteen new books, including young adult series books, picture books, novels, a

short story collection and a dayplanner.

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[29] Klassen, Betty. Review: *The Diary of Laura's Twin*. In *Canadian Review of Materials*. Volume 14, No. 20. May 30, 2008.

[30] Rothstein, Kris. Review: *Reconcilable Differences*. *Herizons* magazine website: <http://www.herizons.ca/node/252>

3. PROCESS MANAGEMENT DEFINED

In *Managing the Publishing Process*, management analyst Ralph Hancox identifies three

potential styles of management for a publishing company: management of functions,

management of people, and management of process. The last is practiced to varying

degrees by most trade publishers today, including Second Story Press. This chapter

introduces process management theory, including the five key decisions made by process

managers, and expands upon the continuum of six interlinked process management

components presented in the introduction. The key decisions and some of the elements on

the continuum will be applied to Second Story Press' management style and strategies in

subsequent chapters.

Functional management is the more traditional style of "assembly line"

organization, in which activities are performed sequentially and individually, directed by

heads of departments with little or no overlap in work between departments.[31] Hancox lists

three major weaknesses in this style of management:

> 1. Only the supervisor (manager) knows in detail how the units tie together.
> 2. One step might be completed well ahead of time, which can mean that
> a) The employee in charge of that step may have nothing to do until the next assignment, and
> b) The work completed during that step becomes dormant and cannot easily be adapted to any of the project's changing needs later in the process.
> 3. If one step is delayed, the whole project can fall hopelessly behind.[32]

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[31] Hancox 2-16.

[32] Hancox 2-17.

Figure 1 shows an example of an employee structure and chain of command in a

publishing house using functional management. Note how the departments are separated

from one another, with only the managers of each department having regular interaction

with managers from other departments and with the publisher.

FIGURE 1: SAMPLE FUNCTIONAL MANAGEMENT STAFFING MODEL
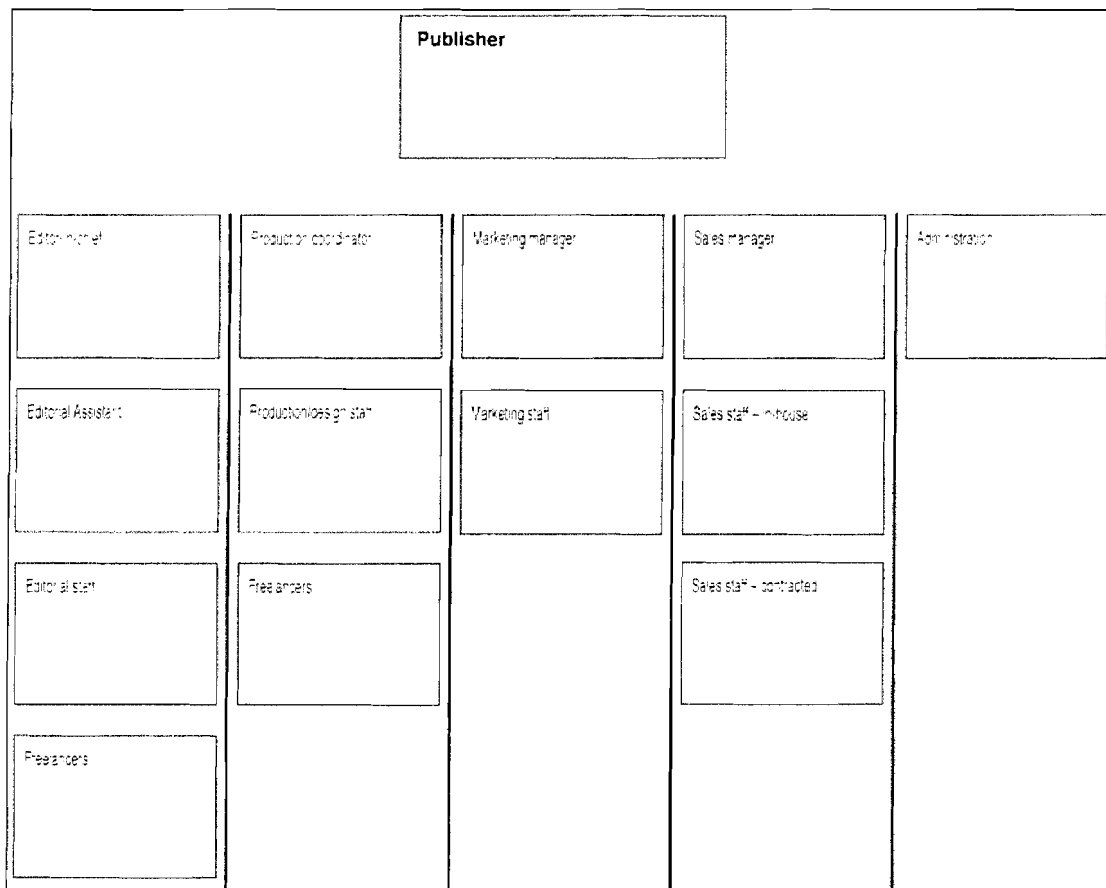
Functional management is inherently hierarchical, with a clear chain of command

in a downward direction from publisher through managers to employees. Since only the

managers of each department know how the units of work tie together, employees may understand their own jobs well, but do not know what others are doing in other steps of the process. When employees only understand their own work in the process chain, there is no chance for them to come up with ways to improve the overall process, or to take the initiative to tailor their own work with the next stages in mind. Potentially valuable input from professionals can be lost: "lack of consultation with the individual specialists in an organization who are required to do the work is symptomatic of a functional management hierarchy."[33] Particularly in a creative industry like publishing, an organization run in this manner may not be using the skills and knowledge of its staff to its full potential.

Management of people is similar to functional management in that input from employees is limited. When management is concerned primarily with managing people, employees are simply told what to do in precise and limiting terms. As in functional management, employees under a people-management system are given no opportunity to analyze the work done by others or to come up with creative alternatives.

Enter the alternative to management of functions and of people: management of process. Process management in publishing is defined by Hancox as "the systematic analysis of links between all the progressive tasks in turning a piece of intellectual property into a 'publication.'"[34] This is in contrast to a functional management style, which tends to view work as separate tasks from separate departments adding up to create a project. Instead, process management recognizes an inherent overlap between tasks in the publishing process

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[33] Hancox 3-3.
[34] Hancox 1-1.

and seeks to link tasks together. Open channels of communication both between and among departments are encouraged, allowing for employees to remain abreast of the progress of their colleagues, and to gauge their own progress against that of the entire project.

Managers in a process management organization must determine the following key policies regarding the operation of their companies:

1. How decisions will be made
2. The most productive patterns of activity
3. The most influential operational network
4. How to encourage flexible, proactive, responsive communications
5. How to create linkages that produce rational group behaviours[35]

These key policies will differ greatly from company to company. There are no absolute, prescriptive rules on how to manage a process management-administered company.

From the introduction to this paper, we recall that the first component in the process management continuum links purpose and mission with strategy. Because every company has a different purpose and mission, decision-making strategies are not universal. Managers must decide how decisions will be made based on what is best for the company. For instance, because everyone at the early Women's Press *was* a manager—an ideological choice based on the press' purpose and mission—Women's Press had a consensus-based decision-making process. Another publishing house might solicit staff input on some decisions, while leaving certain determinations to the discretion of the manager, while yet another press might choose to task all decision-making to the publisher. At a large press, there might be several levels of decision-making, from middle management through

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[35] Hancox Foreword-2.

ownership. All of these decision-making models can be process management models, so long as the principles of seeing the overall picture, communication and linkages throughout the process are maintained.

Once the strategy has been determined, a process management manager will need to make the second key decision: determining the most productive patterns of activity for her company, whether it be a division of labour along department lines or a more collaborative structure. Some of the variables that will affect this decision include firm size—a two-hundred-employee company is much less likely than a five-employee company to employ a highly collaborative model—and the background and expertise staff members bring to the organization. The third key decision, determining the most influential operational network, follows in a similar vein: depending on the size and experience of the staff and the genre of the publisher, it might be more beneficial to one firm contract out talent, while another will keep all work in-house. Key people of influence might be occasional advisors or paid staff members.

The fourth key decisions for a process management manager is how to encourage flexible, proactive, responsive communications. From the process management continuum, operational plans and management style are central concerns to the operation of a firm. Hancox specifies a number of strategies that should be adopted by good process managers. Firstly, a manager must internalize and practice the values expressed in the purpose, mission, and strategy statements of the company, and demonstrate that similar behaviour is expected of other department managers. Leading by example is key to promoting a work environment that reflects the values of the company. The manager must have a clear vision

of the overall process by which work will be done, and be able to explain the objectives of the company. She must also determine who is responsible for which aspects of the work and involve all participants in the planning and discussion phases relevant to their work. Finally, of particular interest to the feminist and egalitarian press in question in this paper are the principles of reaching a consensus on plans at each level of group participation, to outline the communications practices and information flow that will keep all those concerned "in the picture," and to present the completed plan for team commitment before proceeding.[36]

The fifth and final key decision for a process management manager is determining how to create linkages that produce rational group behaviours, or, from the process management continuum, the effective organization of the process. As Hancox emphasizes:

> The major requirement of a functioning organization is that its structure encourages and animates networks and linkages that permit people doing the work to achieve a purpose and mission with optimal effectiveness. By conceiving of the "organization" in this sense—rather than as a formal "structure" with pigeon holes and reporting lines—individuals in an organization will frequently achieve well beyond an expected potential— even while working within the constraints and specifications set out for their work.[37]

Communication must flow within departments, between departments, and between managers and subordinates, from top to bottom and bottom to top. However, linkages cannot only be made between people. There is little motivation for an employee who is simply told what to do without understanding what part her work is going to play in the overall flow of the project. A good manager must create explicit links between the work

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[36] Hancox 3-9.
[37] Hancox 3-1.

her employees do and the overall mission of the company, directly relating the work to the press' overall goals and objectives. An employee in such an environment will then have two goals: to do her work to the expected standards for personal success *and* to do the best work for the common purpose and mission of the company. As Hancox argues in the quotation above, when employees are given the opportunity to adapt their work to the needs of the company, there is more opportunity for greater achievement.

As alluded to in the introduction to this paper, process management does not necessarily mean that all members have equal management responsibility, as in the Women's Press collective or among the co-owners of Second Story Press at its inception. Rather, it simply means that all employees are encouraged to communicate with one another and to offer their own advice and suggestions for improving the process and keeping it moving along effectively. By valuing the contributions of all employees, a process management environment shows a high degree of respect for the professionalism of all those involved, while still maintaining a structure that allows management to retain decision-making power. The collaborative work style and respect for professionalism inherent in process management fit in well with the feminist values of the management at Second Story Press.

In a successful process management environment, all elements of the process must be integrated to ensure the continued success and survival of the firm. A successful manager must integrate all the components necessary for the successful management of a company: industry expertise, market knowledge, sound planning, a motivated workforce, consistent expectations, issue management, professionally informed decision-making,

sound financial management, and more. None of these components stands on its own, but must be considered in relation to the overall company strategy. Further, for effective process management, the manager must consistently communicate with her entire staff regarding these process components in order to keep the staff well-informed and contributing to its full potential. The "continuity" element of the process management continuum refers to the way in which the entire process is continuously reinforced with all participants at all stages, allowing for a consistent management style and working environment that everyone in the firm can "buy into."

While the process management continuum provides an overview of every aspect of the functioning of a company, including the links between marketing, sales, administration and financial planning and forecasting, this paper focuses specifically on the management of Second Story Press as it reflects the feminist mandate of the press.

4. APPLYING PROCESS MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS TO MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AT SECOND STORY PRESS

I) PURPOSE AND MISSION

As presented in the introduction and expanded upon in Chapter 3, the first of the six interlinked components in the continuum of process management deals with purpose and mission. A well-constructed purpose and mission statement, effectively communicated to the press' staff, is the foundation upon which all the management strategies are built. At Second Story Press, the feminist purpose and mission is directly reflected in the management style and decisions about the direction of the press.

In *Managing the Publishing Process*, Hancox advises that a well-understood mission statement is absolutely crucial to the success of a publishing operation: "the success of any ongoing publishing concern will be how it marshals, directs, manages and controls the resources necessary to achieve, in the most efficient manner, the mission that the publishing house has set for itself."[38] Process management theory takes into account that every press is different and that each press' mission will be central in determining its strategy; therefore, there are no hard and fast rules about how to create and use a mission statement. However, there are several basic recommendations for a mission statement that can help to promote a clearer understanding of what a press stands for.

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[38] Hancox Foreword-1.

A successful mission statement should be written with clear and unambiguous wording, explaining the broad limits within which the organization will operate and the operation's driving philosophy.[39] Different approaches to purpose and mission statements reflect a choice by the publisher in the way publishing strategy is articulated; a press might choose to emphasize its audience, its product or its ideological guidelines.[40] Because Second Story Press' feminist philosophy is the key impetus upon which the operation is built, its philosophy is the focus of its purpose and mission. Like Women's Press, Second Story publishes books focusing on issues relevant to women and children. From the Women's Press mission statement:

> Women's Press publishes books in a wide range of genres, from adult non-fiction to illustrated children's books.
> We look for material that supports and enhances the development of feminism in Canada. We perceive feminism as a liberation movement which must be inclusive of all women and which works in opposition to systems of oppression – racism, anti-Semitism, ethnocentrism, classism, heterosexism, ableism and ageism.
> Women's Press is committed to ensuring that publishing is accessible to communities of women whose work has not been published in the past, as well as to supporting the work of new writers.
> Enacting this commitment means we are actively seeking material by and about: First Nations women; Women with disabilities; Lesbians; Women of Colour; Working-class and poor women; Bisexual women ...[41]

Unlike Women's Press, Second Story does not have a formal written statement, except for official purposes such as grant applications. However, the press' mandate is conveyed to its staff through a variety of means.

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[39] Hancox 1-3.
[40] Hancox 1-5.
[41] Hancox 1-5.

The focus of the press is feminism; the topics considered in editorial discussions and appearing in the catalogue are all in line with the press' ideology. Having such an ideological mandate is an advantage for the press in terms obtaining buy-in to the press' mission: all staff members identify with and agree with the feminist ideology behind the publishing program. It would be difficult for someone who did not share those values to work in such an ideologically-motivated environment. Of course, feminists do not share a universal set of beliefs, and it is not expected that all staff members bring exactly the same perspective to the mission of the press. It is not enough to say that Second Story is a feminist press and expect that to speak for itself. Therefore, in order to develop a universally-understood mission statement, the objectives of the organization must be clearly laid out. This is an opportunity for staff members to be actively involved in the shaping of the press' mission.

Publisher Margie Wolfe's main strategy for presenting Second Story's mandate to staff members is the press' collaborative editorial process. As explained in Chapter 3, a process management company emphasizes open channels of communication among all employees involved in a project. Second Story's management has selected a collaborative process as the most productive pattern of activity (one of the manager's key decisions as mentioned in Chapter 3) and the one that best reflects its feminist mandate. At Second Story, editorial decisions are as shared as possible. All staff members are involved in the acquisitions process. Reader reviews of past manuscripts, whether accepted or rejected, are shared among all staff members in order to help them to better understand why a particular book fits or does not fit Second Story criteria. Templates for rejection letters are available

to all staff members for reference, noting that Second Story publishes only Canadian authors, some serious non-fiction but no scholarly books, and no "fluffy" children's books (as defined in Chapter 2-ii), among other criteria. Open discussion about potential books is not only encouraged, but is entrenched in organizational policy.

From frequent meetings and discussions surrounding purpose and mission, Second Story's understood mission statement emerges as follows:

> Second Story Press publishes Canadian-authored fiction and non-fiction books for children and adults (mainly, though not exclusively, women) for the Canadian and international markets.
> Second Story Press seeks material with progressive content and will not publish any book with no clear plot or purpose beyond entertainment.
> Second Story Press books reflect the real-life experiences, interests and concerns of women and children, offer ground-breaking subject matter, and give new and yet-unheard voices a chance to say what they need to say.

The collaborative acquisitions process allows all staff members to help make decisions about which books do and do not fit the mandate of the press, as well as helping the mandate to evolve. This management strategy works for Second Story Press on two levels. As a process management strategy, involving all staff members in learning and developing the purpose and mission promotes communication and creativity while driving and adapting the strategy of the press. As an ideological decision, participation from everyone in as collaborative a manner as possible is in line with the feminist and egalitarian thinking that informs process at Second Story Press.

At editorial meetings, any or all of the following questions are considered in detail:

Is the book something that fits into Second Story's mandate? There is sometimes disagreement among readers on this issue. A good story is a prerequisite, but alone, a good

story does not make a Second Story book. Further, not every book that is contracted is unanimously liked or thought to be in line with the feminist thinking of the press. The constantly-evolving mission of Second Story is the focal point of discussions about potential manuscripts. An important element of Second Story's mandate is to publish ground-breaking books for its audience. Therefore, many of its new books may not resemble previous books. For instance, Wolfe began publishing the First Nations Series for Young Readers because of a perceived lack of books on the topic in the marketplace, as well as a progressive interest in telling the stories of First Nations people. So long as the manuscript fits within the scope of publishing progressive books with real-life relevance for women and/or children, it can be considered.

Is the book in an acceptable format? Second Story Press is committed to making the story fit the format, and vice versa. For instance, a submission might arrive as a picture book proposal, but the topic is too large or is inappropriate for a picture book, as in the case of *The Secret of Gabi's Dresser*, which began as a picture book submission by author Kathy Kacer and was turned into a multiple prize-winning[42] novel. Similarly, could the book be altered to fit a current series, which might help to improve sales? A manuscript or query might not stand on its own, but with some shaping, could become part of the Kids' Power or the new Gutsy Girls series.

Lastly, but not unimportantly, is the book going to sell? The stakeholders are considered with every book: the target audience is primarily women and children, with the books serving as an educative tool both for those readers who share the press' progressive

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[42] Second Story Press website. <http://www.secondstorypress.ca/>. 2008.

point of view and those who do not (yet). Because Second Story Press believes in giving a voice to authors of great stories that might not otherwise be published, occasionally the management is willing to take a risk on a book that might yield a low volume of sales. Since it is impossible to survive by publishing an entire season of such books, the market is a major consideration. Will the book (particularly if it is a children's book) sell on the international market? Can it be placed into school curricula? Is there potential for translation?

Wolfe frequently relies on her own intuition and experience to tell her whether a book will be successful, but she is willing to listen to other members of the staff, many of whom are represent a different reader demographic than she. For example, in a discussion that spanned a number of editorial meetings, some staff members spoke in favour of a complex historical fantasy novel, while Wolfe remained doubtful that it would sell. Wolfe still encouraged her staff to convince her of the book's merits, since so many of them believed in the manuscript. This is a clear example of the process management model in place at Second Story Press, in which all employees are asked to contribute to the decision-making process.

Second Story Press' treatment of its purpose and mission is a particularly valuable process management tool because of its fluidity. Because the press is willing and able to adapt its mandate to include new genres and new directions, the resulting editorial strategic policies are adaptable to market conditions, evolving societal standards and preferences. The key editorial strategy in place at Second Story, directly informed by its mandate, is to be as innovative, imaginative and ground-breaking as possible. Second Story Press owes

much of its continued success to Wolfe's willingness to take her employee's opinions to heart and to adapt her press' purpose and mission to keep Second Story well-positioned in the marketplace. This strategy is a mark of her commitment to good process management as well as to keeping up with the constantly-evolving tenets of feminism to keep the press' books challenging and relevant.

II) STAFFING MODEL AND MANAGEMENT STYLE

Second Story Press' feminist mandate is not only reflected in its books. As previously alluded to, the feminist philosophy of Second Story's management extends into the style of management and the work environment in place at Second Story Press. Publisher Margie Wolfe's key management goal is to create a collaborative organization, wherein all staff members are respected and their active participation is sought on the projects in which they are involved. This chapter explores Second Story Press' staffing model, management style, and policies which encourage open channels of communication and input by all staff members on all projects.

The employee structure at Second Story Press at the end of 2008 consists of Margie Wolfe as publisher, Carolyn Jackson as managing editor, Emma Rodgers as marketing manager, Melissa Kaita as production coordinator, Phuong Truong as general manager, and Barbara Howson as subsidiary rights and special sales staff. Four of the six staff members are full-time employees; Jackson and Howson work part-time. Most design and production duties are carried out in-house, but much of the editorial work beyond

acquisition, copy editing and proofreading is contracted to freelance workers, with Jackson editing a few books each season and outside editors handling the rest.

One of the five key process management decisions, as introduced in Chapter 3, is how to create the most influential and successful operational network. Wolfe values experience and skill above many other factors when choosing her staff. For instance, Jackson's years of experience make her a trusted editor to whom Wolfe readily turns for educated opinions and advice. However, Wolfe is also keen to turn to younger staff members in matters of technology, believing that a new generation of publishing professionals has been better-trained in multimedia and computer skills. While Wolfe is still very involved in much of Second Story's marketing ventures, she defers completely to Rodgers on issues of Internet marketing, preferring to let her have control over Second Story's online presence. Similarly, Wolfe trusts technical production matters to Kaita, who makes the decisions regarding Second Story's printing and design, in consultation with others. Because all staff members are professionals in their areas and embrace the press' mandate, it is easy for management to respect their expertise and allow them the freedom to perform their duties.

Wolfe's vision for an ideal feminist work environment is "egalitarian, nurturing and humane."[43] Her choice to be the sole head of the company is in no way an endorsement of the "assembly-line" model of functional management. Rather, Wolfe is a leader among leaders: each staff member at Second Story is the manager of her own department. One of Hancox's process management principles suggests that leaders should be developed at all

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[43] Wolfe-Horel interview, September 24, 2008.

levels of the organization, so that while hierarchy in some form is unavoidable, steps are

taken to empower employees at all levels.[44] Second Story Press has done this by creating a

work environment that sometimes resembles a two-level collective, with Wolfe at the

centre of the circle, holding final decision-making power, and no particular hierarchy

among the rest of the staff. Figure 2 gives a pictorial depiction of the staffing model at

Second Story Press.

FIG. 2: STAFFING MODEL AT SECOND STORY PRESS

Carolyn Jackson, managing editor		Melissa Kaita, production coordinator
Emma Rodgers, marketing manager	**Margie Wolfe, publisher**	Phuong Truong, general manager
Barbara Howson, subsidiary rights and special sales	Interns	

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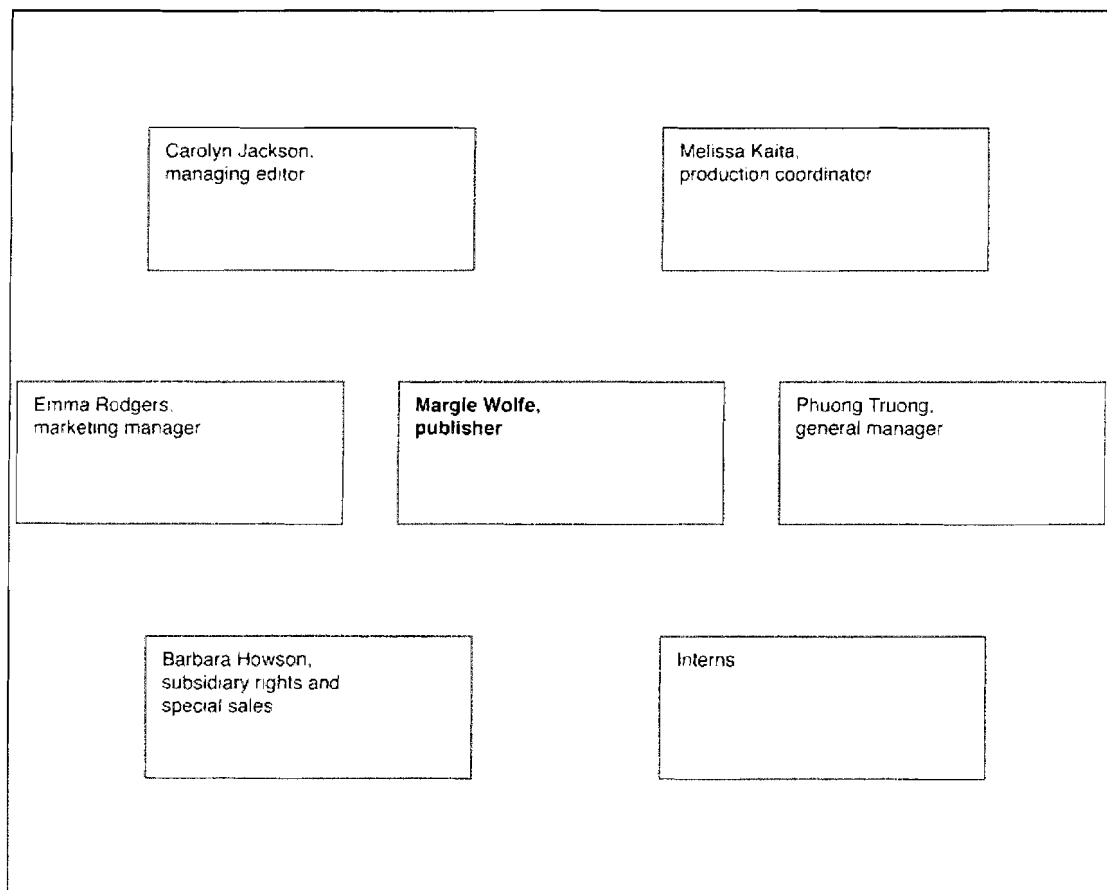
[44] Hancox 1-18.

For effective communication in a process management environment, Hancox advises: "in constructing an effective organization, the first rule, then, is 'top down and bottom up' – with no obstacles to communication in the way."[45] This reflects the fourth key management decision introduced in Chapter 3: how to encourage flexible, proactive, responsive communications. The small staff size of Second Story aids in this regard—it is much easier for a manager of a very small organization than one of a large company to be available to all staff members for direct consultation. Rather than a chain of command with Wolfe at the top and only certain staff members relaying instructions to the other employees, there is direct communication between all employees in the circle. Each staff member reports directly to Wolfe, and frequently solicits advice and assistance from other staff members. In a larger company, it may be necessary for departmental managers to act as go-betweens to facilitate the top-down and bottom-up communication chain. Such a structure would still represent effective process management-style communication, only on a different scale. Second Story Press is fortunate that its small staff size facilitates face-to-face communication, which allows for the personal, encouraging environment Wolfe and her feminist colleagues so highly value.

The "nurturing and humane" credo is immediately apparent in Wolfe's care for her employees. From pasting book covers onto poster boards to cleaning out the common fridge, no task is beneath any member of Second Story Press. It is very common to find Wolfe, while rushing out the door for a meeting or errand, to ask if anyone needs something brought back to the office, or whether someone needs help with a task. When

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[45] Hancox 3-22.

delegating work to staff members or interns, she asks rather than orders, and unless it is immediately time-sensitive, adds: "when you have a chance, please. Don't stop what you're working on."

Although she is very involved in every aspect of the publishing process and encourages her staff members to keep her as up-to-date as possible on the progress of their work, Wolfe chooses not to micro-manage. This strategy has two major benefits: not only does this free up time for Wolfe to do her own work, but staff members at Second Story feel an enhanced sense of responsibility and ownership over the books they publish, which further encourages them to produce their best work. This sense of responsibility also encourages staff members to become more involved in the creative processes of the press, offering their own ideas and initiating tasks without waiting for the publisher to request it of them. The result of this leadership development strategy is engaged, enthusiastic, productive staff members eager to share their ideas and confident in their work.

The management strategies at Second Story Press directly shape the day-to-day organization of the press' activities. Management actively seeks contributions from all participants and considers all usable ideas on any given project.[46] Since experience is the key value at Second Story Press, the less experienced members of staff often respectfully defer to those with more years in the industry behind them. This makes perfect sense both in terms of feminism and in terms of process management: earned respect for knowledge and experience is paramount in feminist thinking, and it is in management's best interest to make sure that tasks are being handled by those best suited to them.

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[46] Hancox 3-9.

Interns at Second Story Press are integrated into the process management

structure, treated as competent, capable contributors, and are not baby-sat during their

internships. Second Story has a constant rotation of interns and relies on these (mostly)

publishing students to support the entire staff. Most internships, particularly if there is only

one intern working at a time, are general, meaning that the intern assists with tasks

assigned by any member of staff who needs support in her work. As would be expected in a

process management environment, tasks are prioritized according to their importance and

deadline, not based on who assigned the task. During editorial meetings, the opinions of

interns are taken seriously. This allows for a positive internship experience whereby interns

have the opportunity to take initiative and make major contributions to the press during

their internships.

Regular meetings among managers and the publisher are key to a successful process

management environment, to ensure all employees are kept up-to-date and motivated on

the various projects. The number of regular meetings will vary from company to company,

depending on size and available times. The departmental managers of a very large firm

might meet only twice a year, while a medium-sized firm might hold occasional meetings

among all staff members and more frequent ones for managers only. Staff members at

Second Story Press remain in close contact on an everyday basis, and regular, more formal

meetings further the opportunities to keep up with everyone's work. Because of Second

Story Press' small staff size, employees have the opportunity to meet on a regular basis, and

management takes advantage by scheduling formal meetings often. Regular editorial

meetings, occurring at approximately three-week intervals, allow all staff members to keep

up with the progress of major projects. Further to this, Wolfe has recently implemented

weekly "check-in" meetings, lasting—at least in theory—half an hour, during which every

staff member explains what she is currently working on and solicits help or suggestions if

required. One drawback exists: because of the friendliness in the office and the casual

atmosphere that allows employees to chat freely, meetings often last longer than scheduled.

It is easy to see why a larger company might hesitate to meet so often; if six employees can

extend a half-hour meeting to over an hour, a larger group might never accomplish

anything in a reasonable timeframe. Frequency of formal meetings is necessarily up to the

discretion of managers, and must be tailored to the needs of each company.

It is important to note that much of the process management style of

communication seen in the Second Story model is a direct reflection of its size; almost any

company this small could fairly easily keep all its employees informed and involved, even

without implementing any particular strategy for doing so. As an enterprise grows, if

proper communication techniques are not implemented so that the company's mandate

and strategies are effectively communicated to a larger number of people, employees may

begin to come up with their own differing interpretations of company policy. To avoid this,

the company's mandate and strategies must exist in a communicable form that allows for

growth. Second Story Press' commitment to regular meetings and collaborative process is a

strategy that, if maintained, positions the company to absorb future staff growth without

losing the crucial understanding of the press' mandate and strategies by its staff.

In addition to regular meetings, Wolfe takes the top-down and bottom-up

communication approach very seriously, takes an active interest in her employees' work, and

has an open-door policy which encourages staff members to come to her with regular

updates, inquiries and requests. If she is busy with a task she cannot set aside, she will

schedule an appointment to meet with anyone who needs a moment with her, often over

coffee. Again, the small size of Second Story Press facilitates this type of direct interaction.

In a larger process management company, the owner may genuinely want to meet with

everyone individually, but find it impossible to do so. In those cases, top-down and

bottom-up lines of communication would allow for concerns and questions to be collected

by middle managers, and for information to be dispersed following the meetings.

As introduced in Chapter 3, one of the process manager's key decisions is how to

create linkages that produce rational group behaviours. Problem-solving and issue

management is key for a process management organization. Rational and productive group

behaviour is encouraged through effective communication and mutual respect. Second

Story Press' management places particular emphasis on the technique of managing tasks,

not people. Wolfe explains her outlook on problem solving and issue management as

follows:

1. Every person's body of work should be considered as an entity, not simply as a set of separate tasks.
2. Therefore, should someone make a mistake, even a major one, it does not negate all the good work she has done in the past.
3. It follows that disciplining or reprimanding an employee is neither productive nor fair; mistakes happen, and the employee already regrets the error.
4. The focus after an error is made must be on managing the problem, not managing the person.

This very humane application of collaborative, issue-based problem solving is well in line

with the effective organization component of the process management continuum for

Second Story Press. All staff members are brought in to correct a problem if it is large enough to warrant it; the problem becomes *Second Story*'s problem, not Employee A's problem. Of course, all staff members at Second Story are conscientious and proud of their work, and it is impossible to prevent someone from feeling sorry for having made an error. Still, changing the dialogue from "You made a mistake, and now you have to correct it" to "Here is the situation that has arisen, and we will take these steps to correct it" reduces blame and presents the opportunity to be productive and change things for the better.

As well as being a sound management strategy that helps to diffuse problems, Wolfe's issue management theory serves the feminist desire to build strong bonds between employees. When employees know they will not be harshly blamed for making a mistake, they are most likely to bounce back from setbacks and actively support one another when future mishaps occur. Rational and productive group behaviour is encouraged when staff members learn to rally around one another to provide support when issues needing correction arise.

III) MARKET AND BACKLIST STRATEGY

As a niche publisher, a crucial component of the process management at Second Story Press is its solid market strategy. Believing in the value of Second Story's mission to produce books of importance to women and children, publisher Margie Wolfe sets a high priority on finding ways to get her books to as many potential readers as possible. This

desire has resulted in a marketing strategy that involves a great deal of direct relationship-building and emphasis on the press' backlist.

Much of Second Story Press' current market success has been built on Wolfe's hard work in the press' early years, seeking out particular markets for Second Story's books. A 1997 article in *Quill & Quire* cites her experience with special markets: by this time, she was cold-calling gift shops and gaining positive responses. Second Story was largely motivated to approach these types of retailers by the allure of non-returnable sales, and by the fact that its list at the time contained potential gift books, such as cookbooks (a component of the early Second Story Press catalogue) and dayplanners geared toward women (still published annually).[47] Wolfe's willingness to do the necessary legwork and seek out special markets has allowed her to make numerous solid connections in the publishing industry over the past twenty years. Second Story's sales have increased by 325 percent since the late 1990s. In 2008, the press released thirteen titles, the most in its history, and triple the number published during its early years. This modest growth is in keeping with Second Story's goal of publishing a small number of very good, progressive books for women and children. Keeping the list small also helps to facilitate collaboration on every book.

Knowing where and how well books will sell comes with experience. Learning to analyze patterns of sales performance of comparable titles and genres is a good start, but

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[47] Toller, Carol. "Making the most of gift fairs: Specialized trade shows can generate hefty sales, but require the right approach." In *Quill & Quire*. August 1, 1997. <http://www.quillandquire.com/news/article.cfm?article_id=814>

Wolfe ultimately believes that "experience is informed instinct."[48] Of course, there is more

to successful marketing than intuition, which is where the "informed" part of informed

instinct comes into play. Second Story keeps a comparative record of sales data and revenue

information. Second Story's sales numbers are carefully tracked and distributed monthly to

all staff, along with a comparison to the previous months' sales, in order to keep everyone

informed as to how the various titles are performing. As for direct market knowledge,

Wolfe's years of experience are supplemented with the inclusion of Barbara Howson, a

veteran of the children's book industry, who assists with subsidiary rights and special sales.

As a team, they are formidable: at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2007, Wolfe and Howson

met with over one hundred international publishers between them.

Second Story Press' management looks to its marketing and backlist plans to

provide security for the press. Making provisions for the growth of the enterprise is a

responsible process management strategy[49] and must be considered at all times. Without

this goal in mind, a manager might become too short-sighted and damage the long-term

health of the organization in order to capitalize on a short-term gain. Instead, the

enterprise should always be viewed as a whole, and the future health of the press considered

when making decisions about the direction of the publishing program. Second Story Press'

willingness to "tweak" its list in order to publish books that follow market trends is an

example of its commitment to the big picture. While management would never

compromise Second Story's mandate by publishing books with any sexist, racist,

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[48] Wolfe, Margie. Information interview with Julia Horel, September 24, 2008.
[49] Hancox 1-3.

homophobic, ageist, ableist or otherwise non-progressive content, Second Story's choice of

titles has definitely been influenced by the market and by the sales of its different genres of

books.

Of particular note is the changed mix of children's and adults' books published by

Second Story Press in recent years. Second Story published few children's books in its early

years. However, by 2008, children's books comprised 60 percent to 65 percent of Second

Story's frontlist.[50] This is only partly because children's books represent a greater

opportunity to produce ground-breaking literature, where Second Story publishes on

subjects that have been taboo. The major motivating factor in Second Story's newfound

commitment to children's publishing is the sales success of the children's program,

particularly in international markets, which has driven the management to alter the press'

editorial mix in a way it never anticipated. Also in 2008, Second Story's international sales

comprised 40 percent of its overall sales, heavily bolstered by its children's book sales, as

opposed to the 15 percent to 20 percent international sales ratio of ten years ago.[51]

Additionally, success in fitting Second Story Press books into classroom curricula and

school libraries has geared much of the press' efforts in special markets toward educational

buyers. Wolfe regularly meets with educators and schools boards to determine where her

books might fit into school classrooms and libraries. Children's literature was not the press'

original key area of interest, but keenly observant management has shifted the direction of

the press to maximize its success.

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[50] Wolfe-Horel interview, September 24, 2008.
[51] Wolfe-Horel interview, September 24, 2008.

Second Story is also capitalizing on the marketability of successful children's book series. The award-winning Holocaust Remembrance Series for Young Readers has become part of some Canadian schools' curricula. The Women's Hall of Fame series is Second Story's largest series, comprising thirteen titles by Fall 2008, and has recently been sold into Korea. The books in this series feature short biographies of women from around the world who are "mavericks in their field[s]"[52] such as art, film, science, and medicine. Another ground-breaking series is the First Nations Series for Young Readers, which includes *Gray Wolf's Search*, *Great Women from our First Nations*, *Great Athletes from our First Nations*, and, most recently, *Men of Courage from our First Nations*. Finally, the Kids' Power series is "inspired by real stories of young people who have taken action to make their lives—and their world—better."[53] The books in this newest series are *Maggie and the Chocolate War*, based on the true story of a Canadian children's chocolate strike to protest price hikes in the 1940s, and *Yeny and the Children for Peace*, based on the October 25, 1996 children's vote for peace in Colombia. Always seeking opportunities to boost Second Story's sales and visibility in the market, the press has actively pursued new series titles and has found particular success in the school market with these series. Of the thirteen books released in 2008, six were series books.

One title stands out among Second Story Press' children's books: Karen Levine's *Hana's Suitcase*, published in 2002 as part of the Holocaust Remembrance Series for Young Readers. This series began because of Wolfe's personal interest in Holocaust literature for

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[52] Fall 2008 Catalogue 20.
[53] Fall 2008 Catalogue 2.

children and her belief in the importance of the books, but has grown to become the most recognizable aspect of Second Story's publishing program. As the first few books in the series had met with success, Wolfe was confident that *Hana* would do well in the trade and educational markets. She never anticipated the degree of success it has attained. As of November 2008, *Hana's Suitcase* has been sold into fifty countries and translated into thirty-six languages. It has been made into a stage production and appeared in a film in 2002, with another currently in development. It is the most awarded Canadian children's book in thirty years, including such awards as the Canadian Library Association's Children's Book of the Year, the National Jewish Book Award, and a Governor General's Award nomination. The United Nations has recently given an award to *Hana's Suitcase* and proposed an educational package based on the book, to be distributed to eighty countries. Among Second Story staff, *Hana* is referred to by first name, as if the book were personified.

The immense success of *Hana's Suitcase* is used as a marketing opportunity. What began as a single editorial decision has grown to become a significant component of Second Story's strategy. The Second Story Press catalogue dedicates an entire page to *Hana* and her awards and accolades every season, and another page to the rest of the Holocaust Remembrance Series for Young Readers. Most seasons now feature a new Holocaust Remembrance book, with sales all but guaranteed to the booksellers, schools and organizations who eagerly anticipate the next title. More importantly, however, *Hana* can be used as an opening to introduce Second Story Press to people who are unaware of the press and what it publishes. Its continued success also offers Second Story enough

income to take a risk on projects it might otherwise be unable to afford. Although the book is now six years old, Second Story is still fitting it into the market as often as possible, in as many ways as possible.

As with many publishers, particularly children's publishers, Second Story Press' backlist is crucial to its survival. Rather than relegating previous season's books to a dormant closet, Second Story's strategy is to keep them in the foreground, seeking out new opportunities for them. This strategy means that Wolfe must consider future viability as part of the planning for every book she publishes, keeping up the sales levels for as many books as possible. Second Story's catalogue is more than the sum of its individual books; it is an entire package. Because Second Story is a press with a relatively small backlist, it is able to give attention to its backlist in its marketing strategies. Wolfe is familiar with every book Second Story has ever published, and continues to treat nearly all of them as an active part of the catalogue. For instance, when meeting with an international publisher at a trade conference, Wolfe might begin with *Hana's Suitcase* or a new title from the current season, but once she has determined what types of books the publisher is interested in, she is comfortable introducing any of Second Story's titles into the mix. Thanks to this strategy and the careful planning that goes into each book, books published five or ten years ago are still being sold into international markets and to schools. Series books are another opportunity to revive interest in older books: an international sale of *Hana's Suitcase* might be followed by a request for other Holocaust Remembrance titles, and an interest in one of the Women's Hall of Fame series books might develop into an interest in the entire series.

Seeking out specific markets and prioritizing the backlist are conscious planning choices made by the management of Second Story Press. These choices clearly reflect the process management continuum: the press' strategy is to publish a small number of books with a specific focus; therefore, rather than assuming they will sell, the books need to be carefully placed where they are needed in the marketplace. The Second Story Press model of integrating its backlist into its operational plans is also strongly informed by the size of its press and the fact that there is only one overseeing manager. Wolfe is uniquely positioned to be able to keep track of the press' entire backlist on her own. Although growth is usually a positive thing, management at Second Story Press is hesitant to increase the number of books published in future seasons. Not only would a greater increase require additional staff and limit Wolfe's ability to personally oversee every project, but her ability to keep track of every title on a fast-growing backlist could also become compromised. A larger press with multiple managers might adapt to growth more easily, dividing the responsibility of overseeing the press' operations among several people. At some point, Second Story may reach a size threshold with its current staffing model. In order to continue Second Story Press' growth, it may be beneficial to bring in a co-owner or junior partner, which is currently under consideration as a future operational plan.

IV) MANAGING THE EDITORIAL PROCESS

The fourth interlinked component on the process management continuum as introduced in Chapter 3 involves process organization. The organization of the editorial process at

Second Story Press follows directly from its management strategies and the divisions of responsibility as set out in its staffing model (see Chapter 4-ii). This section explains in greater detail the organization of the editorial process employed at Second Story Press and the management strategy that drives it.

The organization of the editorial process at Second Story Press differs depending on the type of manuscript under consideration. Second Story accepts unsolicited manuscripts and receives approximately thirty per month. Of the thirty-one books published since Carolyn Jackson became the managing editor at Second Story over two years ago, fifteen have originated from unsolicited manuscripts, although that number is unusually high. Typically, unsolicited manuscripts generate closer to 35 percent of Second Story's list. As a part-time employee, it is impossible for Jackson to handle all the unsolicited manuscripts that arrive—it would likely be impossible for a full-time employee unless it were her sole responsibility. However, it is Second Story's policy (driven partly by its feminist desire to treat potential authors with dignity and respect) to respond to every manuscript and query it receives. Therefore, every staff member and intern is responsible for reading and reviewing a few of the more promising manuscripts per month. As mentioned in Chapter 4 on editorial vision, this participative acquisitions process serves to keep all employees well-informed and closely involved with all the books Second Story publishes.

Jackson screens all manuscripts and rejects those which are obviously inappropriate for the press, then passes along those which seem appealing. If a staff reader feels the manuscript has potential, or if she is not sure whether or not the manuscript is appropriate,

she will recommend that someone else read the manuscript and add her own review to it. If several staff members feel a manuscript has real potential, it is discussed as a group and passed to Jackson or to Margie Wolfe for serious consideration. As introduced in Chapter 3, one of the key precepts of process management is the involvement of all participants in the planning and discussion phases relevant to their work.[54] When a manuscript is being strongly considered for publication, every effort is made to ensure that all staff members have a chance to read and review it, either before or after it has been contracted, so that as many opinions as possible are taken into account—or, at the very least, so that everyone is familiar with what is being published.

In contrast to the acceptance process, the rejection process is much quicker and less communal. Rather than sharing opinions on potential rejected manuscripts, staff members and interns are empowered to reject any manuscript they feel is not appropriate for Second Story Press, without needing to justify their decision to the editor or publisher. As explained in Chapter 4-i, the mandate of the press is made clear to all staff members and interns both verbally and in the form of rejection letters that can be used as reference. Second Story is too small to consider most of the unsolicited manuscripts it receives; it is therefore necessary to be somewhat ruthless in rejecting manuscripts that do not fit into its mandate or into the current season. Whenever possible, staff members write their own rejection letters based on the most appropriate of the dozen available templates. In order to be as helpful to the authors as possible, and in keeping with the compassionate, humane

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[54] Hancox 3-9.

ideals of the press, rejection letters are personalized with a short comment on the manuscript, including a recommendation for submission to another press if appropriate.

If a book has been solicited rather than contracted from an unsolicited manuscript, the process normally begins with Wolfe, who signs the author contract and keeps the entire staff members well-informed of the process. Even in the case of solicited books, ideas for what to solicit are sought from everyone: new book ideas for series, timely and important topics, and/or author recommendations.

Much of the work of gathering opinions and keeping staff members up-to-date occurs informally on a day-to-day basis, but Second Story Press also conducts more formal editorial meetings approximately every three weeks. All full- and part-time staff members, including interns, attend editorial meetings. A typical editorial meeting agenda might look like this:

1. Welcome
2. Current projects: Titles in editorial or production stages for the upcoming season (ie. Fall 2008) are listed.
3. Upcoming projects: Titles in early stages for the next season (ie. Spring 2009) are listed.
4. Projects under consideration: Titles or ideas for future seasons are listed.
5. Reader reviews
6. Other business
7. Adjournment
8. Lunch

The meeting begins with a welcome from Wolfe and Jackson, and often with an informal "check-in" by all staff members (although this may become unnecessary as weekly meetings are implemented). The meeting is officially conducted by Jackson, but as always, others are welcome to interject where their input is needed. Each title for the current

season is discussed in the order in which it appears on the agenda, and staff members currently working on that title update the group on their progress and how closely they are meeting the target deadlines.

The next two points on the agenda often blur together as the meeting progresses. Projects which are scheduled for the next season, as well as those under consideration but without an official timeline, are typically discussed together. Jackson introduces the titles slated for the following season and updates the group as to how far along these books are in the editorial process. The stages of these books vary considerably: some are completed manuscripts already at the editorial stage, while others may still be in contract negotiation and have not even been written yet. Some of these titles may not yet be confirmed for the next season, and staff members are sometimes invited to weigh in on when a particular book should be slotted for publication. As alluded to in Chapter 3, Hancox recommends that management should strive to reach a consensus on plans at each level of consultation and participation.[55] Second Story's use of this strategy serves to strengthen all employees' involvement in the process. The greatest amount of communal decision-making and sharing of opinions occurs during the discussions of books to be published and under consideration for publication. Wolfe encourages these conversations in order to make the best possible decisions and to solidify the culture of teamwork.

Once each book or potential book on the agenda has been discussed, Jackson asks for reader reviews for the unsolicited manuscripts that have been distributed among the employees. Rejected manuscripts are not discussed, unless someone has been asked to give a

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[55] Hancox 3-9.

second opinion on a manuscript. Manuscripts "with potential" are divided into two categories: "I like it" and "I'm not sure." If someone feels strongly that a manuscript is appropriate for Second Story Press, she will briefly explain to the group what the story is about and pass it to a second reader. If she is unsure, she will describe the manuscript and offer her misgivings; if the misgivings are serious enough, the group will likely reject it. If there is still uncertainty, someone else will volunteer to read it and give her opinion. If a manuscript is popular enough among the staff, it will be passed to Jackson or Wolfe for serious consideration.

The formal part of the meeting ends after any other business has been conducted. The staff lunch, paid for by the company, is an integral part of the strategy of Second Story's editorial meetings. As staff members do not typically take lunch together, the staff lunch allows for additional informal time spent together. Lunch provides a further opportunity for all staff members to interact more informally and to talk about anything they like that may not have come up during the course of the meeting.

Because of the collaborative nature of the acquisitions process at Second Story, authors sometimes wait longer than at other presses for a response to their queries, particularly if the manuscript is promising enough to be passed among many staff members. Second Story employees read and review manuscripts on their own time (a lucky intern might be given time to do so as part of her regular duties). Therefore, a manuscript might take months to be contracted. For an author, this could be a financially challenging delay. However, there is a major upside for Second Story: by the time a book is contracted, most, if not all, staff members have read and formed an opinion on the manuscript and are

aware of what is being published. This allows the publication process to proceed on a number of fronts at once: the marketing manager can begin thinking about potential marketing ventures, and the production manager can begin thinking about layout and cover design while the book is in the editorial stage—there is no need to wait until the manuscript has been finalized to start considering the possibilities.

If the book has been solicited and contracted by the publisher, and not signed from an unsolicited manuscript, the process is a bit different and often less collaborative. For instance, in late summer 2008, Second Story signed a contract for a young adult novel featuring a protagonist with an eating disorder. From previous editorial meetings and discussions with staff members, Wolfe knew this was an issue her staff believed was important for Second Story to publish on; more importantly, she as the publisher felt it was an excellent story and an important book. She read the manuscript independently, signed the book, and told everyone after the fact. In effective process management, collaborative process can be set aside in favour of a professional decision made by the manager, whose ultimate responsibility is to ensure the financial viability of the company. While staff members at Second Story Press appreciate the collaborative process, it is understood that, as the owner, Wolfe has the deciding vote because she is ultimately financially responsible for the company.

Once a book has been contracted, the process turns from acquisition to production. Wolfe's strategy here is to facilitate as much collaboration as possible while ensuring that every staff member has clear responsibilities. While all employees are responsible for their particular jobs, Second Story's small staff size requires more collaboration throughout the

process than a larger press might. The manager's decision regarding how to structure the most influential operational network is informed by the press' size and the various skill sets of its employees. For instance, as mentioned in Chapter 4-ii, there is only one in-house editor, who works part-time. Therefore, while Jackson edits a few books a season, most structural and substantive editorial work is contracted out, but copy editing and proofreading are done by the staff. If an intern at Second Story has an interest and skill in editorial, she may also have the opportunity to contribute copy editing or proofreading work. Emma Rodgers, the marketing manager, also asks for proofreading of press releases on a regular basis, while Melissa Kaita, the production manager, solicits final-stage proofreading of typeset materials. This work is taken on by staff members and interns in addition to their day-to-day duties.

Phuong Truong, Second Story's general manager, handles much of the copy editing work for Second Story's books. Truong is a perfect fit for the collaborative staffing system at Second Story: she has administrative and financial training as well as editorial skills, and in her role, she is able to use both of her skill sets for a much more enriching job experience than she would find in an administrative role in most other companies. Her shifting roles allow her the flexibility to build her skills in multiple areas. Second Story benefits as well: it gains her business expertise, her editorial work that would otherwise need to be contracted out, and her maximum productivity as a satisfied, intellectually stimulated employee.

Once the manuscript has been edited, production manager Kaita designs the interior of the book and the cover and places any illustrations or photos. If an illustrator is needed for a book, she will often ask the opinions of the staff members to help choose.

Finally, Kaita often asks for votes on cover designs, colours and fonts to determine what the group likes best.

Hancox suggests that a potential danger in a company with such overlap and collaboration is territorial conflict, or the desire by employees to protect the work assigned to them and to not prevent others from assisting with it or encroaching on their jobs.[56] This is avoided because of the flexible communication and rational group behaviours encouraged by Second Story's management. Everyone "buys in" and shares the desire to produce the best possible books, and is happy to collaborate with others to that end. When a Second Story book is published, it is through shared effort by every member of the staff; for any given book, anyone may be asked to contribute in a new way. Because everyone's contributions are recognized as vital to successful publication, everyone "owns" each book and can be proud of her involvement.

The consensus model of editorial process at Second Story Press is one of its most significant process management policies, which also falls in line with its feminist philosophies of teamwork and respect. Although employees are experts in their fields of work, they see no reason not to seek the input of others in order to produce books that truly reflect the common efforts of all staff members. Taking its lead from the attitude of the publisher, the staff's focus is on producing the best possible product. As Hancox argues, "the best way to create the necessary environment in which to motivate groups to perform in a committed, cooperative, task-oriented, viable manner is to establish a participative

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[56] Hancox 3-6.

organization capable of true process management."[57] Wolfe's style of management of the

editorial process has two huge benefits: not only does Second Story Press' publishing

program succeed, but all staff members benefit personally from an enhanced sense of

ownership of the books they have seen through all stages, from acquisition to production.

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[57] Hancox 3-7.

9. CONCLUSIONS: THE FUTURE OF THE SECOND STORY PRESS MANAGEMENT MODEL

It is clear that the management strategies in place at Second Story Press have proven to be successful thus far. Not only has Second Story shown slow and steady growth in sales over its history, it has also seen increased positive market recognition in the form of reviews and awards. Margie Wolfe believes that if government funding were to cease, Second Story would be capable of surviving, albeit in an altered format.[58] Without delving deeply into the financial information of the company, it appears that Second Story Press' immediate future is secure.

Second Story Press has never had any owner who has not been with the press since its origin, so the issue of succession is an important one. Wolfe does plan to sell Second Story Press some day. The ideal situation would involve a gradual buy-in by a junior partner or partners, who would slowly take on more and more of the management responsibilities as Wolfe's own role diminished, until she remained in an advisory capacity, if the new owner wished. Naturally, she hopes that the new owner would continue Second Story's mandate of publishing high-quality books with a feminist, progressive angle, but she is realistic in the understanding that once she has sold her press, it is free to take on a life of its own.

Second Story Press should take into consideration that while word-of-mouth discussions of intuition and company policy are successful in the current model, largely

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[58] Wolfe-Horel interview, September 24, 2008.

because of Wolfe's level of control over the entire operation of the press, it is worthwhile to implement more formal procedures for conveying the press' goals and policies. Even if these procedures are not implemented in the current model, they would be valuable tools in informing a potential new manager about the press. New staff members and interns at Second Story are able to "catch up" with the rest of the staff in the current model under Wolfe's supervision, but a new manager would benefit from an immediate, clear understanding of the policies she is expected to apply. Additionally, extending process management strategies to the financial planning of the firm would also be beneficial. If it can continue to communicate its mission and strategies to all parties inside *and* outside the organization in a clear and useable manner, Second Story Press will continue to be successful in achieving "buy-in" from everyone involved in its operations.

Cautions aside, because of the successful intuitive application of process management strategies at Second Story Press, specifically the integration of the purpose and mission of the press with its management style and process organization, it is my opinion that any new manager is unlikely to stray too far from the current management and editorial policies. If Wolfe's new partner buys into the press gradually and integrates herself into the staffing model over a number of years, there is no reason why things should suddenly change when Wolfe leaves her position as publisher. The new owner will have spent time learning to lead a collaborative work environment, and will trust the staff to perform its duties well. The editorial vision may slant in a new direction over time, but this has been true since the origin of the press. Some of Wolfe's greatest managerial attributes, and therefore some of Second Story's greatest strengths, are the ability to see the "big

picture" and to adapt to the needs of both staff and the market. When the purpose and mission are modified, they inform new management strategies to suit them. Second Story Press has shown that it is nothing if not adaptable.

Although Wolfe is undeniably the face and voice of Second Story Press, the high level of involvement of all staff members in all aspects of the press helps to create a strong feeling of what Second Story *is*. When Wolfe leaves for a vacation or to attend a book conference, the remaining staff members in the office do not suddenly jostle for status or jealously guard their work. The nurturing, humane, process-oriented office environment exists whether the manager is present or not. Second Story's culture is based on mutual respect among all staff members, all of whom believe in the guiding principles behind the books published by the press. Facilitated by Wolfe's feminist-informed, strong but gentle process management strategies, Second Story Press is a company with a sustainable management personality, capable of surviving long after the retirement of its publisher.

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