

Turning One

By Beverly Denver

Giving birth to a new publication is not unlike giving birth to a new baby. Both are highly anticipated events, bringing with them much excitement and great joy.

That's how we here at *Houston Woman Magazine* felt 12 months ago when our premiere issue rolled off the press and into the hands of 10,000 women throughout the city. After months of intense planning and hard labor our "baby" was here. Admittedly, we were proud and eager to throw a party!

Regretfully, though, there was no time for celebrations or sighs of relief; already we were facing deadlines for the next issue and needing to finalize plans for the third. So, we forged ahead, thinking only about the health, growth and future well being of the newborn. Getting through the first year became our focus. The festivities, we decided, would have to wait—until March 2005—when the magazine turned one year old!

But, alas, we are—as always—facing another round of deadlines and delaying still that fete with cake and champagne. Even so, we cannot even one more baby step without looking back, reflecting and saying thanks to all the wonderful people (angels) who have made possible the reality that is *Houston Woman Magazine*.

Talking about the support received in the first year cannot begin without first mentioning and giving special praise to our advertisers. Most made the decision to invest their advertising dollars long-term and before the first issue was published. They were told of our concept and vision, of the number of issues we'd print each month, where we'd distribute them. With no real prototype to evaluate, they jumped in with blind faith—believing like us that Houston women were ready and eager for a publication like ours, believing too that we would deliver on our promises.

Month after month, the colorful, Texas-sized issues went out, and the women of Houston, with curiosity, picked them up and perused the pages. They read the commentaries and the motivational articles. They read the profiles on the featured women and the non-profit groups assisting women. They checked out The Pink Pages.

Almost immediately, we got mail!

We heard things like this: "I love your magazine. I love that it's not another 'hair and makeup' publication. I like that it's not another plastic surgery directory. I like that the women featured are not all Size Two, 20-year-olds. I like that the magazine features real women who look like my friends and me. I like that your magazine is filled with inspiring stories that never get told. I like the business and career information. I love The Pink Pages, and on and on."

Those letters were so appreciated. They helped us get to know our readers. They showed us we were being heard (and understood) by the very women we were hoping to “talk” to—professional women, aged 30 and up!

The feedback affirmed, motivated and kept us going—even when typical start-up challenges presented themselves and seemed so daunting.

Grateful too were we of the encouraging number of paid subscriptions that came in early. Those charter subscribers wrote checks and supported our mission to inform, inspire, celebrate and connect women. Their investment in the publication is still so appreciated and forever kept in mind. Always, we think of our readers first when plans for upcoming issues are made. Always, we ask: Is this a story our subscribers would care about? Learn from? Be inspired by? Hopefully, we guess right more often than not!

Many readers contributed to *Houston Woman Magazine* in another, very important way. They called or e-mailed their ideas – about women we should feature, political issues we should cover, health stories we should report on. The list of ideas grew, and one by one, we responded. By year-end, though, we had barely scratched the surface in that stack of great suggestions. To all who have not seen their ideas show up in the magazine, we can only say, “Stay tuned!”

Throughout the first year, a number of talented freelance writers, artists and photographers discovered the publication, stepped forward, introduced themselves and expressed interest in joining our team. They showed us samples of their work; we were impressed. So much talent out there! Today, we boast that – to date – more than 50 of those freelancers have been listed among our contributors. Many are women; but some are not! Yes, men too contribute here—and in some cases—in no small measure.

As we put the final touches on our first anniversary issue, we want, more than anything, to acknowledge and extend our heartfelt gratitude to all these special people. Without them—our advertisers, readers and contributors—we just wouldn’t be here!

Thanks, everybody! We truly love you all!

Houston Woman Magazine
March 2005