

Print Media and Publishing Training Board



Manpower Update Report

Print Media and Publishing Industries

2024



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Contents

Introduction	2
Background	
Objectives	

Methodology	3
Overview	
Focus Group Meetings	
Desk Research	
Data Analysis	
Limitations	

Findings	4
Factors Affecting the Development of Print Media and Publishing Industries	
Latest Development and Trends of Print Media and Publishing Industries	
Manpower Demand	
Training Needs	
Challenges in Recruitment and Staff Retention	

Recommendations	17
Government	
Education/Training Institutions	
Employers	
Employees	

Introduction

Background

The Print Media and Publishing Training Board (PPTB) of the Vocational Training Council (VTC) is appointed by the Government of the HKSAR. According to its Terms of Reference, the PPTB is responsible for determining manpower demand of the industry, assessing whether the manpower supply matches manpower demand, and recommending to the VTC the development of vocational and professional education and training (VPET) facilities to meet the assessed training needs.

To reflect the dynamics of the manpower situation, the PPTB conducts one full manpower survey every four years supplemented by two manpower updates with the latest trends and manpower information of the industries collected.

The PPTB completed its latest manpower survey in 2020. Following the release of the first manpower update in 2023, the second manpower update report is completed in 2024 with findings and recommendations published in this report.

The 2024 manpower information update comprises:

A. a focus group meeting to gather views from industry experts on the latest developments in the industries, manpower and training needs, recruitment difficulties,

and measures to tackle the challenges that the industries face; and

B. desk research analysing job advertisements in the Print Media and Publishing industries.

Objectives

The objectives of the manpower update are:

- A. to examine the latest trends and developments of the industries;
- B. to explore the job market situation and training needs;
- C. to identify the recruitment challenges; and
- D. to recommend measures to meet the training needs and to ease the problem of manpower shortage.

Methodology

Overview

This update report aims to provide qualitative descriptions of the recent development of the industries through focus group meetings, supplemented by quantitative data of recruitment advertisements from desk research.

Focus Group Meetings

The two focus groups were formed through engagement of the industry experts from the following sectors to understand the latest trend and development of the manpower, training needs and recruitment difficulties in the print media and publishing industries:

Print Media Industry

- (i) Digital Printing
- (ii) Book Printing
- (iii) Packaging Printing
- (iv) Commercial Printing

Publishing Industry

- (v) Digital Publishing
- (vi) Children Books Publishing
- (vii) General Books Publishing
- (viii) Textbook Publishing

The focus group meetings were conducted on 5 and 7 December 2023. The staff of the PPTB Secretariat as the moderator led members to in-depth discussions on topics set out by the Working Party on Manpower Survey of the PPTB. The discussion at the

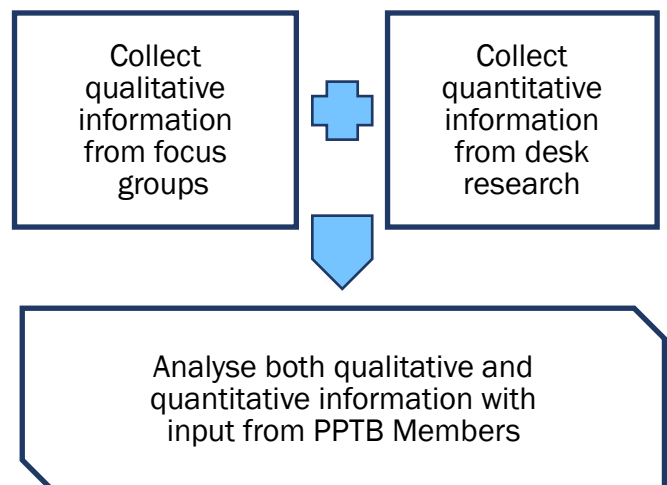
meetings were recorded and transcribed to facilitate the analysis.

Desk Research

The desk research was conducted between November 2022 and October 2023 to collect job advertisements of the print media and publishing industries from major online recruitment portals through an employment information system. The information collected was mapped against the list of companies related to the industries under the Hong Kong Standard Industrial Classification. After mapping and removal of duplicated records, a total of 3,597 recruitment records were collected during the research period and served as indicative information of job market trend.

Data Analysis

The analysis consists of the following three steps:



Limitations

As this is not a full manpower survey, the findings and recommendations of the focus group meetings are more qualitative in nature and the report focuses mainly on the manpower trends.

The information of job advertisements was collected from major recruitment portals and the Labour Department. Other channels, such as head hunting for managerial positions, recruitment through social media

platform or industry referral, were not covered. Media production and design companies engaging in the provision of print media and publishing related services are not covered in the desk research data. Since the data collected is a snapshot of a particular period without reference to any historical data, this can only be served as supplementary information to the findings of focus group meetings.

Findings

Factors Affecting the Development of the Print Media and Publishing Industries

Local Conditions in Hong Kong

With the relaxation of all pandemic measures and opening up of Hong Kong borders to both the Mainland and international markets in the first quarter of 2023, local economic and business activities had started normalising. Though the economy was facing macro-financial challenges amid rising interest rates, downward adjustment in the local housing market and the global economic slowdown in 2023, a series of promotional campaigns and measures, including "Hello Hong Kong",

"Happy Hong Kong" and "Night Vibes Hong Kong" and the Consumption Voucher Scheme launched by the Government to revive the tourism industry in Hong Kong had led to a boost in the local consumption last year. According to the latest release¹ of Census and Statistics Department in January 2024, the Hong Kong economy in the fourth quarter of 2023 increased by 4.3% over a year earlier and increased by 3.2% for 2023 as a whole.

Serving as a support for publishing, advertising materials and packaging market,

¹ Source: https://www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/press_release_detail.html?id=5380

the print media industry is greatly affected by the performance of local economic market and other industries. The digital era has driven the spending of advertising campaigns towards digital channels and social media platforms, resulting in a gradual drop in the demand for traditional advertising media². Demand for security printing such as the printing of credit cards, event tickets and invoices declined considerably. The publication of books and magazines, such as financial print materials, has also turned from printed copies to electronic versions. Despite the trend of digitalisation, the food packaging and labelling market continued to be growth areas. There was an increase in personalised and custom-made products ordered by consumers and brand owners, which conduced to the provision of a comprehensive service including creative product design, printing and packaging service by print media companies for capitalising on the business opportunities. For the publishing industry, nearly one million visitors attended the Hong Kong book fair in 2023³, which revealed that the reading habit and culture were still prevalent in Hong Kong. The pandemic had struck readers' motivation of purchasing physical books from bookstores. However the situation showed an improvement last year and there was a trend of readers turning to buy electronic books (e-books). Additionally, the ongoing

review on curriculum and assessments in Hong Kong schools has brought challenges for the publishing industry, particularly for educational and textbook publishers.

The value of total retail sales in December 2023 increased further over a year earlier and grew notably by 16.2% for 2023 as a whole⁴. It is anticipated that inbound tourism and private consumption will continue to underpin economic growth in the local market and provide support to retail businesses. With the economic recovery and growth on track, more business opportunities in the print media and publishing industries would be envisaged.

Global Environment

Given the complex and rapidly changing global economy and business environment, many economies are still struggling to return to pre-pandemic growth paths. Macroeconomic factors, ranging from heightened geopolitical tensions, to high interest rate environment, and supply chain disruptions caused by geo-economic fragmentation, continue to impede global markets. During the period from January to November in 2023, the total exports of printed matters to the markets of Mainland China, the U.S. and the EU decreased by 14.7%, 7.7% and 10.8% respectively⁵.

² Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1378762/hong-kong-ad-spend-breakdown-by-channel/>

³ Source: <https://hkbookfair.hktdc.com/en/Press/Press-Releases/2023jul25.html>

⁴ Source:

https://www.news.gov.hk/eng/2024/02/20240201/20240201_163734_947.html?type=category&name=finance&tl=t

⁵ Source: <https://research.hktdc.com/en/article/MzEzOTg4ODEw>

Looking to the year ahead, the difficult external environment will continue to pose pressures on Hong Kong's exports of goods in 2024.

Worldwide Geopolitics

Geopolitical tensions and uncertainties will impact on the global economy and business atmosphere. The two regional wars in Eastern Europe and the Middle East have escalated the availability and accessibility of energy resources and affected the food supply market worldwide. The attacks in the Red Sea have disrupted shipping through the Suez Canal, affecting the global container traffic. The China-US relations, particularly

across trade, supply chain and economic areas, have become more complex in recent years. There is an increasing tendency of reducing the dependence on China in economic activities, such as manufacturing, sourcing and technology in economies worldwide. These have caused concerns and uncertainties to the development of the print media and publishing industries. To diversify risks, expand business networks and explore market opportunities, customers searched for more secure and sustainable manufacturing plants and markets in other areas. They also looked for faster turnaround and shorter delivery time in order to maximise their returns through smaller but more frequent orders.

Latest Development and Trends of Print Media and Publishing Industries

Print Media Industry

Digital Printing

The pandemic has further accelerated the development and adoption of digital printing. More agile, responsive and cost-effective printing solutions offered to businesses provided an opportunity to print media industry amid the challenges and uncertainties posed by the pandemic. Digital printing technology allows for easy customisation and personalisation of printed materials, such as brochures, direct mail, and

promotional materials, enabling businesses to adapt to changing customer demands and market trends with minimal order of quantities and print-on-demand services. The trend in the demand for digital printing for editable version of textbooks from schools was observed. Digital printing technology allows for on-demand printing, facilitating schools to produce customised textbooks as per their specific requirements for enhancing the learning experience of students.

To capitalise on the increasing demand for digital printing, the print media industry needs to make substantial investments in

equipment and technology. Upgrading and acquiring new printing presses, digital printers, finishing equipment, and software for operation require a significant financial commitment. Print media companies, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), should cautiously analyse their companies' financial position and evaluate the potential return on investment, consider available financing options, and develop a strategic plan to ensure the investment aligns with their long-term goals and development.

Information Technology System

The application of information technology has become an integral and crucial part of the sustainable development of print media industry. An integrated IT system facilitates e-commerce functionality, online ordering services and delivery processes. By providing an e-commerce platform with online submission of digital files, price quotations, status of production and delivery information, print media companies can adapt to the digital landscape and meet the evolving needs of their customers.

Adoption of enhanced IT systems, smart manufacturing and artificial intelligence in the business process continues to advance the print media industry in Hong Kong, enabling digital transformation, enhancing operational efficiency, and expanding revenue opportunities. The development and maintenance of IT systems and e-commerce platforms with secure payment gateways require print media companies to

consider their financial investment.

Environmental, Social and Governance

With the introduction of new sustainability standards by the EU in 2022 and implementation of rules between 2024 and 2028 to all large multinational companies and listed SMEs, Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) strategy and consideration are becoming increasingly important for Hong Kong print media enterprises. ESG is indeed becoming an important measure of companies' resilience and effective risk management. In response to the international trend and new global requirements to assess the sustainability and ethical impact of a company's operations, enterprises have to consider formulating an ESG strategy on sustainability practices, social responsibility, corporate governance and regulatory compliance and need to stay updated with evolving green policies and regulations imposed by the Government.

Publishing Industry

Online Book Sales

Online book sales have experienced growth and development in Hong Kong in the past years with the pandemic as the catalyst. Apart from selling books via physical bookstores, publishing companies started to promote books through online bookstores to capture the purchasing power of readers in the online markets. The convenience and

accessibility offered by online platforms have transformed the way readers in Hong Kong purchase books. According to the survey conducted by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council at Hong Kong Book Fair in 2023⁶, an overwhelming 96% of the respondents spent an average reading time of 16 hours on reading printed books within the past month, showing a persistent demand for printed books.

To facilitate consumers purchasing printed books via online platforms as well as promoting the online to offline mode of purchase, publishing companies need to consider the amount of investment on the development, maintenance and provision of e-commerce systems with a user-friendly web interface, and the easy access of a range of printed books and e-books. The popularity of e-books would contribute to the growth of online book sales.

Marketing and Promotion Strategy

With the technological development and advancement, publishing companies would diversify their marketing and promotion strategies to reach a wider audience, increase book visibility and ultimately drive book sales. In addition to the participation in book fairs and organisation of book launch events, publishing companies would leverage the social media platforms to engage readers, build an online community and promote their books. Digital and social media marketing

strategies would become the emerging knowledge and skills of publishers for reaching their readers in the ever-evolving digital world.

Editors would need to devote a certain amount of their time in the digital media promotion activities and works, such as presenting their books/ published works through livestreaming and producing digital media contents for promotion on websites. This not only gives a chance to interact with the readers through social media channels but also allows live shopping to take place online. Apart from editing work, editors would need to be committed to online and offline promotion activities and follow through with marketing activities after book launch.

Educational and Textbook Market

The pandemic has greatly impacted on education systems worldwide, including Hong Kong. School closures, remote learning and disruptions to the academic calendar have driven publishing companies to respond swiftly by providing digital resources to schools for facilitating e-learning. With the rise of digital technologies and e-learning platforms, educational and textbook publishing companies need to shift towards the production of digital learning resources and explore opportunities in the digital market. Both technology infrastructure and talent development need to be deployed for developing interactive e-books, online

⁶ Source: <https://hkbookfair.hktdc.com/en/Press/Press-Releases/2023jul25.html>

learning platforms, and digital supplementary materials.

In view of the recent curriculum changes in the Hong Kong education system, publishing companies must stay updated with the latest curriculum requirements and revise their textbooks accordingly. To supplement traditional printed books, publishing companies are also introducing comprehensive online educational resources through learning platforms. In addition to the development of textbooks, editors are required to attend to curriculum alignment, multimedia production as well as providing teaching support to teachers such as integrating textbooks into suitable teaching strategies and leveraging the merits and application of the textbooks for effective teaching.

Demand of Electronic Books

The e-books markets continue to have a growth potential in Hong Kong. According to the 2023 survey of Hong Kong People's Reading Habits⁷ conducted by Hong Kong Publishing Professionals Society, the results showed that nearly 70% of the respondents had the habit of reading e-books, of which 68% of them would increase their reading time through digital devices whereas 32% of them would consume e-books.

With the increasing acceptance of digital reading formats and the active promotion of electronic platforms by the Government,

publishing companies are gradually more receptive to producing electronic versions of new releases and enhancing the digital reading experience of consumers through interactive features and multimedia content. Continued advancement in technology, in particular the digital platforms and mobile applications, would enhance the development of e-books in Hong Kong.

Sustainable Developments of Print Media and Publishing Industries

E-commerce System

The e-commerce industry in Hong Kong has been experiencing rapid growth with increasing internet penetration, mobile device usage, and changing consumer preferences. Online shopping has become ingrained in many consumers' routines, allowing them to research and access product information easily, place orders and track delivery status instantly through online platforms. Print media and publishing companies should continue to invest in the development of integrated e-commerce systems to provide flexibility and convenience for consumers

To keep up with the trend of digitalisation and sustain in the competitive markets, publishing companies should adopt the 'Online to Offline' (O2O) strategy to draw potential consumers from online sale channels and encourage them to make

⁷ Source: [「香港全民閱讀調查」2023 \(hkpps.org\)](https://www.hkpps.org/)

purchases in physical stores. By blending both online and offline channels, an improved shopping experience could be offered to consumers. For print media companies, an easy-to-use order system with print-on-demand services would greatly enable the provision of an affordable and efficient way to print digital content for various businesses.

Sustainable Printing

Sustainable printing involves adopting eco-friendly practices, exploring green technologies and using recycled and alternative materials with the aim of reducing the environmental footprint of printing operations. As environmental awareness grows across the print media industry, the demand for green printing and its sustainable printing solutions is of vital importance.

To minimise the industry's environmental impact and ensure sustainable industry development, print media companies are recommended to obtain relevant international certifications and standards such as Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) for sustainable forestry practices and ISO 14001 for commitment of environmental management systems. Locally, print media companies are required to comply with the green policies and regulations set out by the Government, including the Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) content limits for printing inks, fountain solutions and printing machine cleaning agents.

One of the key aspects of sustainable printing

is waste reduction. With the popularity of digital printing, print-on-demand services and sustainable packaging, print media companies have greatly reduced the plates used in offset printing, wasted materials such as paper and ink on overproduction, excess inventory due to large print runs and disposal of packaging materials.

By implementing green printing practices and eco-friendly measures, the print media industry could contribute their efforts towards sustainability and responsible business operations and further meet the international trend of ESG on sustainability standards.

Greater Bay Area

The publishing market in the Mainland has nearly recovered and returned to pre-pandemic level in respect of book sales. To capture the fast-growing market share in the Greater Bay Area (GBA) and the rising demand for digital publishing and e-books, Hong Kong publishers or publishing companies are encouraged to establish partnerships with publishing companies in the GBA to leverage on their digital platforms as well as distribution and retail channels for expansion to the Mainland market. Therefore, Hong Kong publications, both printed and digital, could reach a wider readership. Additionally, business practices such as advertising and marketing publications through live video streaming to boost book sales could be shared between the two markets.

The Government has launched various youth programs, for example, Funding Scheme for Youth Internship in the Mainland, Thematic Youth Internship Programmes to the Mainland, Funding Scheme for Youth Exchange in the Mainland, Greater Bay Area Youth Employment Scheme, etc. to enhance Hong Kong young people's understanding of the career development and opportunities in the Mainland particularly the GBA through internship and exchange programmes as well as supporting them to work in GBA cities. To maintain sustainable manpower development for the print media and publishing industries, companies should consider offering suitable internships and job opportunities for widening the exposure of young people.

Belt and Road

The Belt and Road Initiative has opened up a path for exchanges and cooperation among countries, running through the continents of Asia, Europe and Africa, with huge potential for economic development. With the full support of the Government in emerging as an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchanges, print media companies could tap the market potential in the Belt and Road by bringing in talents and expertise from Hong Kong to offer smart and

specialised printing solutions for Belt and Road economies.

Development of Cultural and Creative Industries

The Government has taken an active role in promoting the cultural and creative industries in Hong Kong with the establishment of the CreateSmart Initiative ("CSI") administered by Create Hong Kong in 2009. Funded by the CSI, Hong Kong Smart eBook-Hub was launched in July 2023⁸, with the aim of assisting publishers and writers in converting their printed publications into e-books and audio books, facilitating copyright trading and promoting digital publishing as well as e-reading culture in Hong Kong.

As one of the eight creative industries focused by the Government, print media and publishing industries could integrate cultural and creative products into their marketing and promotion strategies, collaborating with brand owners, bookstores, retailers or distributors by designing and producing cultural and creative products. This will help reach more consumers and achieve the sustainable development of the industries and ultimately, contribute to the advancement of the cultural and creative industries in Hong Kong.

⁸ Source: <https://publishing3.hk/Event/detail/id/6/lang/en-us>

Manpower Demand

Desk Research

The PPTB conducted the desk research between November 2022 and October 2023 to collect the job advertisements of the print media and publishing industries. During the period, a total of 3,597 recruitment advertisements were recorded. The top recruitment advertisement category (top jobs) is presented in Table 1.

Compared with desk research data collected in 2021-22 for 2023 Manpower Update Report of the Print Media and Publishing industries, 2022-23 desk research results were similar with the top jobs in the print media and publishing industries collected in previous period. The data from desk research in general were consistent with the opinions expressed in the Focus Groups. The focus group of the Print Media industry concurred that recruitment at craftsman level such as printing operator and machine operator was especially challenging as there was a lack of market supply.

**Table 1: Top Recruitment Advertisement Category (Top Jobs)
in Print Media and Publishing Industries**

Top Jobs (2022-23)	Top Jobs (2021-22)
<u>Print Media Industry</u> 1. Sales and marketing posts e.g., Sales or Marketing/ Digital Marketing Manager or Executive (131) 2. Printing Operator/ Machine Operator (Offset Litho; Sheet-fed; Web-fed) (76) 3. Proofreader (71)	<u>Print Media Industry</u> 1. Sales and marketing posts e.g., Sales or Marketing/ Digital Marketing Manager or Executive 2. Printing posts e.g., Printing Sales Representatives, Print Media Sales Representatives and Sales Consultants etc. 3. Printing Craftsmen (Offset Litho; Sheet-fed; Web-fed)

Top Jobs (2022-23)	Top Jobs (2021-22)
<p><u>Publishing Industry</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Editors related posts e.g., Editor, Proof-reader, Feature Editor, etc. (297) 2. Sales and marketing posts e.g., Sales or Marketing/ Digital Marketing Manager or Executive, etc. (223) 3. Design related posts e.g., Graphic Designer, Multimedia and Graphic Designer etc. (44) 	<p><u>Publishing Industry</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Editors related posts e.g., Editor, Proof-reader, Feature Editor, etc. 2. Sales and marketing posts e.g., Sales or Marketing/ Digital Marketing Manager or Executive, etc. 3. Design related posts e.g., Publishing Designer, Book Designer etc.

Remarks:

() Figures in the bracket above denote the number of recruitment advertisements

Table 2 shows the hot skills identified from the job advertisements collected. Print media and publishing employers were eager to recruit practitioners with the following trade specific skills and emerging skills:

Table 2: Hot Skills on Demand

Trade Specific Skills		Emerging Skills
Print Media Industry	Publishing Industry	
1. Graphic Design	1. Editing	1. Digital Marketing
2. Proofreading	2. Proofreading	2. E-commerce
3. Quality Assurance and Quality Control	3. Graphic Design	3. Social Media Marketing Strategies

The result indicated that graphic design and proof reading are the trade specific skills commonly required by both print media and publishing industries. Owing to the continuous growth of the online market, emerging skills such as digital marketing and social media marketing are becoming more prominent.

Training Needs

Based on the trends and development of the industries coupled with the views from the focus groups, the skill requirements of print media and publishing industries are listed as follows:

Trade Specific Skills

Graphic Design – In the print media and publishing industries, proficiency in graphic design skills become increasingly essential for conceptualising and creating visually appealing designs for various printed products and publications to meet customers' requirements. Keeping abreast of the latest design software and industry-standard technologies allows practitioners to produce creative designs that are relevant and visually engaging. Graphic design could also facilitate the effective marketing and promotion of printed products and publications by creating visually appealing promotional materials to capture consumers' attention and convey key messages concisely.

Quality Assurance & Quality Control – In the print media industry, quality assurance and quality control are two of the most important elements of successful printing operations so as to boost the quality standards and practices. Print media practitioners are required to be well equipped with updated knowledge of quality assurance and quality control:

✧ *Quality Assurance* – comprehensive planning and deployment for the whole process including raw materials, equipment, printing production, post

processing, quality inspection and other technical consultation as well as quality management standards e.g., ISO standards.

✧ *Quality Control* – evaluation of the quality of performance through conducting tests and inspection of products, services and processes.

Proofreading Skills – In both the print media and publishing industries, the editors/proofreaders are responsible for executing the proofreading and editing tasks. Proofreading continues to be one of the essential core skills which covers a number of professional knowledge and skill areas e.g., spelling and word choice, punctuation, stylistic consistency and formatting issues. It is recommended that professional editors/proofreaders should be well-equipped with proofreading skills.

Emerging Skills

Digital Marketing and Social Media Marketing Strategies – For editors in the publishing industry, apart from arranging a publication's contents, they are also required to engage in more digital media works e.g., participate in online sales, live commerce to promote books/published works as well as produce short videos via social media platforms, etc.

Therefore, it is recommended that editors should enhance the knowledge and skills in digital marketing and social media marketing strategy development.

Generic Skills

Communication and Language – Practitioners of the print media and publishing industries must possess effective communication and language skills for providing good quality services and professional advice to customers as well as enhancing teamwork within organisations.

Project Management – In the publishing industry, editors need to play a leading role in cross-team coordination with production, design and marketing departments. Apart from a good understanding of trade specific knowledge and skills, they should be able to

possess good project management skills to ensure each part of the project is up to standard and are delivered on time and on budget. Project Management skills are also required by print media practitioners to plan, execute and monitor the whole production process for output with quality and on schedule.

Digital Literacy – Digital literacy becomes vitally important in the workplace as it enables practitioners to access and utilise digital technologies, analyse and evaluate digital information as well as creating and sharing content using digital platforms. By developing and mastering digital literacy skills, practitioners in the print media and publishing industries could keep up with the continuous advancement in the digital world and support the sustainable development of the industries.

Challenges in Recruitment and Staff Retention

Public Perception of the Industries

With the development of digital technologies and the availability of digital content, there is a perception that the print media and publishing industries are facing challenges and experiencing a decline. The print media industry is often perceived as outdated and a traditional trade by the general public while for the publishing industry, the younger generation would label it as a staid and old-fashioned industry. Working at the manufacturing plants for print media

companies may not be appealing to young people nowadays. With the availability of various career choices in the labour market, young people would prefer to explore other career opportunities.

Lack of Career Prospect and Professional Recognition

A clear career development with progression pathway would be of major consideration for young people to plan their future career. Lacking knowledge of the business

operations and related job requirements of the print media and publishing industries may greatly discourage them to enter the industries.

There is no degree or above programmes currently offered to the practitioners of the print media and publishing industries. Without formal recognition or qualifications for the knowledge and experience acquired and accumulated by the practitioners, in particular editors of general publications, educational books and textbooks, makes it difficult for the industries to retain experienced staff and recruit new talents, posing a serious problem to manpower succession.

Limited Supply of Manpower in the Market

The print media and publishing industries continue to face insufficient supply of manpower for positions such as printing machine operators, professional editors and publishing designers. In the past years, experienced operators are approaching retirement age whereas new blood for replenishment is difficult to recruit. Besides, the younger generation having been trained in design and print media prefers to develop their careers in pre-press, sales and marketing, and creative design related jobs when entering the industries. Thus, the

supply for the sustainable manpower development in the industries is insufficient.

Attractive Remuneration Package and Working Environment Offered by Other Industries

The remuneration packages offered by the print media and publishing industries are not competitive as compared with other industries, such as security services and teachers. Additionally, the undesirable working environment in some production plants/offices and work time arrangement, especially working at night shift, for some print media companies makes it not preferable for the younger generation who believe in pursuing work-life balance.

Scant Talents with Digital Skills and Multi-skills

The print media and publishing industries are undergoing noticeable changes due to digitalisation, application of IT and shift towards online platforms. There is an increasing demand for talents with digital skills and multi-skills in the industries. Proven knowledge and understanding of digital marketing skills and media production skills are eagerly required in the market and need to be addressed in recruitment for long-term talent development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To attract new talents and to support the sustainable manpower development of the print media and publishing industries, the following measures are recommended to the Government, education/training institutions, employers and employees:

Government

Offer Funding Support for Business Transformation

The Government should further support the business transformation of the industries to keep up with the technological advancement and create a favourable environment for sustainable industry development. To facilitate the adoption of smart technology, more funding support should be offered to the print media and publishing industries to upgrade technological infrastructure and equipment for the transformation of business and production processes, in particular subsidies for investing cutting-edge printing machines for print media companies.

Provide Incentives for Talent Development and Retention

To assist the industries in recruiting, developing and retaining talents, it is recommended that the Government should provide more subsidies to industries such as allowances to companies for recruiting

graduates, deploying employees to work in overseas offices like in GBA or Belt and Road countries and upskilling employees, like joining exchange activities and overseas visits for broadening their international exposures and sharing of good practices.

Nurture and Promote Reading Culture

To nurture the reading habits of students and young people, the Government should further promote the reading culture in schools and community to enhance the reading and learning abilities of students and the public. Collaboration with the publishing industry, schools and community partners should be strengthened by organising various reading activities to the public for creating a favourable reading environment and increasing their exposure to various publications. More incentives such as subsidising the participation fees of the publishers in the Hong Kong Book Fair could be considered to provide a sales channel to the publishing industry to market their books and related products in book fairs.

Education/Training Institutions

Offer Professional Recognition

Professional and systematic training and qualifications at degree or above level are currently not available in the market for editors in the publishing and print media industries. Education/training institutions should consider offering training and professional qualifications with a holistic approach for practitioners to acquire a formal recognition on the professions of editing and printing. By providing a clear career prospect and personal development pathway, new talents could be attracted to join the industries and simultaneously, experienced practitioners could be retained.

Offer Professional Training for Reskilling and Upskilling

Education/training institutions should offer professional training courses or workshops for equipping practitioners of the print media and publishing industries with trade specific skills as well as digital skills, such as digital marketing and multi-media production, to keep them abreast of the latest technological developments and market trends of the industries. It is recommended that retired persons with professional skills in printing machine operation who are experienced in the production process should be recruited as trainers to facilitate the transfer of hands-on skills and experience.

Strengthen Collaboration between Industries and Education/Training Institutions

It would be beneficial for education/training institutions to collaborate with the industries to design suitable training programmes and provide internship opportunities for strengthening the trade knowledge and practical skills of students and industry practitioners. To broaden practitioners' exposure, exchange activities and visits to overseas enterprises and institutions should be arranged, and practical training cooperated with equipment providers could be arranged for enhancing the technical knowledge of the practitioners in printing machine operation.

Employers

Promote the Professional Image of Industries

The industries should help promote the professional image of print media and publishing targeting young people and relevant stakeholders. The print media and publishing companies are encouraged to take initiatives to provide seminars/career talks and experiential activities such as visits to bookstores or industries' workplaces for secondary school students. To arouse the interest of young people in the industries, they should be provided with comprehensive industry information such as business operations, job categories and their specifications, career prospect, training

and professional development.

Nurture a Sustainable Manpower Supply

In view of the challenges in retaining talents, the employers of print media and publishing should provide incentives to employees to acquire the latest knowledge and skills in meeting the digital and industry trends and participate in exchange activities with counterparts overseas and in the GBA to broaden their horizon. To attract new blood for the sustainable manpower supply and development of the industries, employers are encouraged to actively participate in nurturing young people by offering internship opportunities and career exploratory activities for students to explore their career aspirations. Employing retirees or freelancers to fill some posts within manpower shortage areas are also recommended for easing the situation.

Offer Competitive Employment Packages and Favourable Working Environments

To retain employees and promote a culture for career development, print media and publishing companies may consider offering a competitive remuneration package with support, such as subsidies, for employees to upgrade their trade knowledge and skills. A self-fulfilling culture and caring working

environment by allowing flexible work arrangements with a work-from-home option, and offering opportunities of exploring different posts within the company may appeal to employees, especially the younger generation, so as to enable them to achieve job satisfaction at work.

Employees

Develop Multi-skilled Talents with Positive Attitude and Work Enthusiasm

Employees in the print media and publishing industries should keep themselves updated with the latest technological developments and emerging skills of the industries. They are recommended to have a positive working attitude, possess enthusiasm for their career, especially for editors of educational and textbook publishing, and be resilient and proactive in acquiring knowledge and skills for life-long learning. It would be essential for employees to have a global vision and stay open to widen their horizon, explore opportunities and develop their careers beyond Hong Kong.

To enhance employees' competitiveness in the market, they are encouraged to improve on their communication and project management skills to facilitate their work as managers of printing production lines and publishing production teams require interaction with

people and meeting of production deadlines. They should acquire digital skills to help master the digitalisation of business processes in the print media industry and the production of digital media works in the publishing industry.