



No experience necessary - Ebury ad raises ire

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News - Publishing Friday, 20th November 2009

An job ad posted on Guardian Jobs by Random House is causing a good deal of Twittered discontent and consternation for its suggestion that little or no experience is required to be a commissioning editor - merely full engagement with celebrity culture.

Under the heading 'Amy, Lily or Cheryl - who [sic] would you choose?', Ebury Press asks, 'Do you have the ability to spot the next big thing? Do you possess a sound commercial instinct? Are you passionate about popular culture? If so, do you have the courage and ambition to translate your creative ideas into reality and commission a bestselling book?'

The ad goes on to describe the need for 'a passionate, confident, digitally savvy individual' to join the Ebury team. Ideas, opinions and 'a flair for negotiation' are pre-requisites but 'experience within a book publishing environment' would be merely 'an advantage' but 'not essential as full support will be given'. However, 'it is vitally important that you are fully engaged with today's popular culture from the biggest celebrities to rooting out less obvious talent, be it on TV, online or in the press - and that you are able to use this knowledge to help create a product which will sell.'

Those wishing to be considered for 'this exciting Commissioning Editor role' must answer three questions, each in less than 100 words: '1) Why are you the right person for this job? 2) Who you believe is the most influential pop culture figure of 2009? and 3) What do you think is the next big thing?' The financial reward, in addition to presumably fulfilling the dreams of the vacuous and star-struck, is a salary of £36,000.

One senior figure told BookBrunch: 'It is *outrageous* and *very* damaging for an industry, the relevance of which is already being questioned by people who don't see why you need a 'middle man' to flog your wares.' Gail Rebeck, CEO of Random House, is on the board of Skillset, which aims to ensure that those working in the publishing industry are properly trained and qualified for the roles they fulfil. In August, when Skillset published its report on 'Skills Strategy for Publishing,' Rebeck stated: To take advantage of the great opportunities to create and deliver compelling content to educate, engage and entertain readers, the industry needs a workforce capable of combining traditional skills with a new digital and technical capability underpinned by a renewed emphasis on creativity. It is important that the industry understands and moves with the market so the skills gap this report has identified does not continue to grow.

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