

MOTIVATE IN TALKS FOR TAKEOVER OF WEEKLY

Dubai: After weeks of speculation, Campaign Middle East looks set to return to market shelves, after publishing sources confirmed that Motivate Publishing is in negotiations to publish the magazine.

Previously published by ITP, Campaign Middle East has not been available since mid-February, yet it still remains unclear as to why the publication suddenly ceased production.

While sources confirmed that the magazine's licence is in the process of being transferred to Motivate, no timeframe was given as to when the magazine will next be published.

London-based Haymarket Publishing, which produces Campaign UK and licenses Campaign Middle East, yesterday declined to comment on the development.

In addition to not coming out with an edition since February, Campaign Middle East cancelled their annual awards ceremony which was due to take place on February 12.

The weekly magazine focuses on the regional communications industry, covering everything from media, advertising, marketing and digital communications.

Source: Gulfnews

WORKSHOPS DISCUSS TIES BETWEEN EDUCATORS & MEDIA

Over the past month, the Educational Media and Public Relations Department of Jeddah's Education Supervisory Administration for Girls held a series of workshops on the media, the most recent workshop was held last weekend. Arab News was invited to participate in these workshops which discussed ways of encouraging cooperation between the Education Ministry and the media. The workshops were an opportunity to look at the media from the side of the general public and government ministries — a view which is not so flattering.

There is a wide sense of distrust and disrespect for the print media due to some unprofessional and unethical journalists. On the other hand, there is also unnecessary and unreasonable censorship and restrictions on information. Something that leads journalists to use the "back door" and adopt other dishonest ways to obtain information. The workshops attempted to answer the question: How can the two sides cooperate to serve each other's needs for the benefit of the wider society?

Participants, consisting of administrators and school principals, complained that the media only focuses on negative issues and rarely on positive ones. "We only get coverage when there is a problem and the coverage is usually exaggerated and sensational," said one participant.

"Some journalists only quote criticism and not the positive comments to the extent of deliberately trying to get me to say something negative," said another participant.

However, participants also admitted that there are faults and shortcomings in the education system and that focusing on them helps attract official attention and perhaps also resolving them. Participants added that they would like to see balanced coverage that does not distort the truth.

Commenting on the unprofessional and unethical behavior of some journalists that consequently affect people's attitude to other journalists, one of the administrators said that a journalist taped her telephone conversation with her without informing her and without obtaining her permission.

"We want to cooperate with journalists on whatever inquiries that they may have, but we don't want to be quoted on something that could get us in trouble, especially if we are only expressing our personal opinion and not as an official," she said.

Another participant mentioned how she was misquoted recently when she hypothetically said: “There will be jobs for women.” This was subsequently reported as “there are jobs for women.” The woman explained how the misquote resulted in hundreds of women barging into the Girls’ Administration demanding to be employed, assaulting administrators and accusing them of lying and deliberately withholding jobs.

As a result, the ministry issued a circular to all its employees ordering that they are not allowed to speak to journalists without a written permit from the ministry’s media unit.

For journalists, censorship or any kind of restriction that prevents them from accessing information is a problem. Although the reasons that force the ministry to take extreme measures to control the flow of information can be understood, they still cannot be approved and will not succeed because there will always be someone who will anonymously speak to the media thus contributing to the spread of rumors and inaccurate information.



Meanwhile, in order to better serve the society by providing accurate information, it would be wiser to hold the media accountable and enforce financial penalties and a system of obtaining public apologies and corrections for false or inaccurate information — a system which currently does not exist. Credibility is important for the education and media institutes, something which is not in the interest of either.

Participants also added that they were willing to cooperate with the media in highlighting some issues, but fear that the media will not properly handle these issues. They cited the example of sexual harassment and same gender relationships between schoolgirls but added that they did not want to read front-page headlines claiming these issues were rampant. While discussing the issue, participants agreed that among the reasons for the problem is the sense of frustration felt by girls who feel they have no outlet to release energy. This led to some people suggesting that there was a need to hold extracurricular activities at schools including physical education, but again they stressed that they did not want to see sensational headlines stating that school principals wanted girls to participate in sports and tournaments to stop them from involving themselves in same gender relationships.

Participants said they would like issues to be discussed in a reasonable and balanced way with the aim of bringing attention to issues facing people and then presenting solutions to these problems.

Officials added that they want journalists to refer to them for news on policies and decisions rather than relying on rumors and “sources,” who may give wrong or misleading information.

Journalists and editors agree that it is important to get officials to speak on the record but the key is to have honest, transparent and timely cooperation because delays, denials and cover-ups do not serve official ministries and society. Furthermore, it is the duty of journalists to present different perspectives on issues rather than just the official line or the permitted voice.

At the end of all of the workshops it was hoped that this kind of open dialogue between the ministry and the media will lead to better cooperation.

Source: arab news

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