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# Working Title: The Lawyer and the Reader

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*Nupur Joshi Thanks is a former corporate lawyer who has worked with two of India's top law firms. In this e-mail interview, she talks about shifting careers, the idea behind her new venture Paper Planes, and the immutable quality of print media.*

**Bar & Bench: What drew you to law?**

**Nupur Joshi Thanks:** A choice by elimination led me to law. I was encouraged to take up a professional line of work by my family. So between Engineering, Medicine and Law – the choice was easy, given that I was really bad with

numbers and my handwriting was too good!

**B&B: You worked for two of India's top law firms – Luthra and Trilegal. How would you compare the experiences in terms of work-life balance?**

**NJT:** Ah, the elusive work-life balance. So, I have always believed that work-life balance is not a function of the work place alone. A large part of how your work-life balance is, depends on who you are and your style of work. So if you are a workaholic and find it difficult to disconnect from work, then irrespective of where you work, this will follow.

So for me, the work-life balance tilted 75% work 25% life at both Luthra and Trilegal. With Paper Planes, the line between the two has really blurred – because a

lot of what I do now has a lot of elements of what I would do if I was not “working” i.e. read, blog etc. So now I understand what “work is play” really means.

**B&B: The number of corporate lawyers who have quit and taken up alternative careers has increased over the years. What, in your opinion, is the reason for this trend?**

**NJT:** This trend is not unique to lawyers. If you see, everywhere people are trying out new things and I think that is because these are really exciting times to be around – with technology advancing, ideas and experiences are now easily shared and people are realising that there is a lot more they can do with their time and that they can make a career out of their interests and passion. People are also being

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encouraged with so many success stories (from garage to global presence) being put out there. Also, getting an audience for your work has become simpler with social media doing a super awesome job. So with all this – there is a sense of excitement and exploration in the air and new ideas and new ways of life are being discovered – which I think is great.

**B&B: How did the idea for Paper Planes take flight?**

**NJT:** When I left Trilegal to take a break from work, I chanced upon a review of an indie magazine title. I ordered it to see what the fuss was about – and when it arrived, it changed my idea of a print magazine, permanently. Once I was introduced to the world of independent print publications, there was no looking back. However, I realized to my disappointment, that most of these magazines were not

available in India and procuring them was not an easy task. I ended up getting only past issues from the UK or Australia and the cost of shipping was prohibitively high.

My interest in reading print magazines is shared by a lot of people I know and I suspect there will be many others who would enjoy reading/indulging in these amazing publications that truly reveal new worlds. After much deliberation but with utmost enthusiasm, I then decided to bring these gorgeous independent publications closer home for people like me to enjoy, hence Paper Planes was set up.

**B&B: In the age of sites like Reddit and BuzzFeed, do you think people still read magazines?**

**NJT:** *How Much Money Do Twentysomethings Actually Get From Their Parents?*

*Weird ways couples say “I love you”.*

These were the top trending articles on BuzzFeed recently– need I say more? So I think we can safely say that these sites do not qualify as substitutes for materials which engage readers a touch more.

I get it – people are wondering, why print? Isn't it dead? Well, we at Paper Planes believe that it is the bad print which is dead. There are a lot of magazines which launch themselves first on a digital platform, but almost always aspire to someday have a print edition in place. The recognition and feeling of having your work live on in a tactile form for posterity, is something a lot of publishers (including bloggers) aspire to.

With the magazines we send to our patrons, hopefully they will come to agree with us that print is far from dead. These indie

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magazines are put together with a lot of passion which is evident from the content and they have a very distinct visual identity and feel. Unlike the kitchen sink magazines which one buys only to throw away later - these magazines are collectibles in their own right and will, we feel, be valuable additions to people's shelves.

**B&B: Who are your target subscribers?**

**NJT:** Dream chasers, surprise seekers, the wanderers, the story tellers ...you get the drift.

**B&B: Don't you think the price per subscription is a little on the steeper side?**

**NJT:** It may appear so to people who have not had a chance to see these magazines yet, but as a matter of fact, with the subscription service we have really subsidised the cost of the magazines. These magazines cost anywhere

between 6 to 20 pounds (on average) outside India. The Indian MRP is of course much higher. For instance, a 6 pounds magazine will be no less than Rs. 1, 200 in India (in the rare instances they are available here).

The reason why these magazines are often priced high is because they do not carry paid for content. Most of these magazines have a revenue model which is largely dependent on the readers and not the advertisers. This is also what makes them independent and different from their mainstream counterparts.

I am positive that once people see these magazines, they will appreciate the price benefit better and understand the value that they are able to derive out of Paper Plane's subscription service - curating surprise indie print titles from Berlin to New York, Beirut to Kosovo, month on month, guided by the subscriber's

choice of genres from amongst our stacks.

**B&B: How does your legal expertise help you in your current endeavour?**

**NJT:** Well, for starters, I can negotiate my own agreements and save on legal costs!

**B&B: What do you miss about law? Would you consider going back to the profession?**

**NJT:** I am not missing it yet. About going back to the profession - I never say never.

Subscriptions for this month's dispatch close on the 25<sup>th</sup> and can be made [here](#).