

Hungry Like a WOLFE

John Wolfson doesn't mince words: You need 'clips' – publications – if you want to work for a magazine. "I've done everything there is to do in this business," the former Editor-in-Chief of *Boston Magazine* said. "At the very beginning, bylines are your currency."

Speaking to Professor Christopher Boucher's Magazine Editing and Publishing class at Boston College recently, Wolfson explained his take on the industry and offered students advice about breaking into it. First, Wolfson said, students should consider a simple but important question.

"What is it that you want?"

Wolfson asked students.

For Wolfson, a good first career step was enrolling in journalism school – "J School," as it's referred to – at Columbia University. While not essential, he said, his master's degree in journalism helped him establish contacts and acquire those first bylines. "It [J school] gave me just the kind of life I was looking for," Wolfson said.

Even so, though, he sometimes had to learn on the fly – when he took the job at *Boston Magazine*, for example.

"I really wasn't qualified in any way for the job [at *Boston Magazine*]," he said.

Wolfson served as Editor-in-Chief for several years, however, before moving to Editor-at-Large in 2013. Recently, he's scaled back his presence at *Boston Magazine* even further so he can focus on freelance writing.

Wolfson acknowledged the challenges that magazines are facing. Many publications, he said, are shifting their resources from print publications to digital media. With the future of the industry so uncertain, it's as difficult as ever to land a job.

Despite this tumult, though, certain tenets remain. Long-form journalism is still popular, Wolfson said, and publishers agree on the importance of content.

"There's never been a time when storytelling has been more in demand than right now," Wolfson told the class. ❖

Former Boston Magazine Editor-in-Chief John Wolfson gave students some helpful pointers for getting started in the magazine industry:

- Apply for internships
- Start a blog
- Make use of professional contacts
- Know the publication you're pitching
- GET THOSE CLIPS!

